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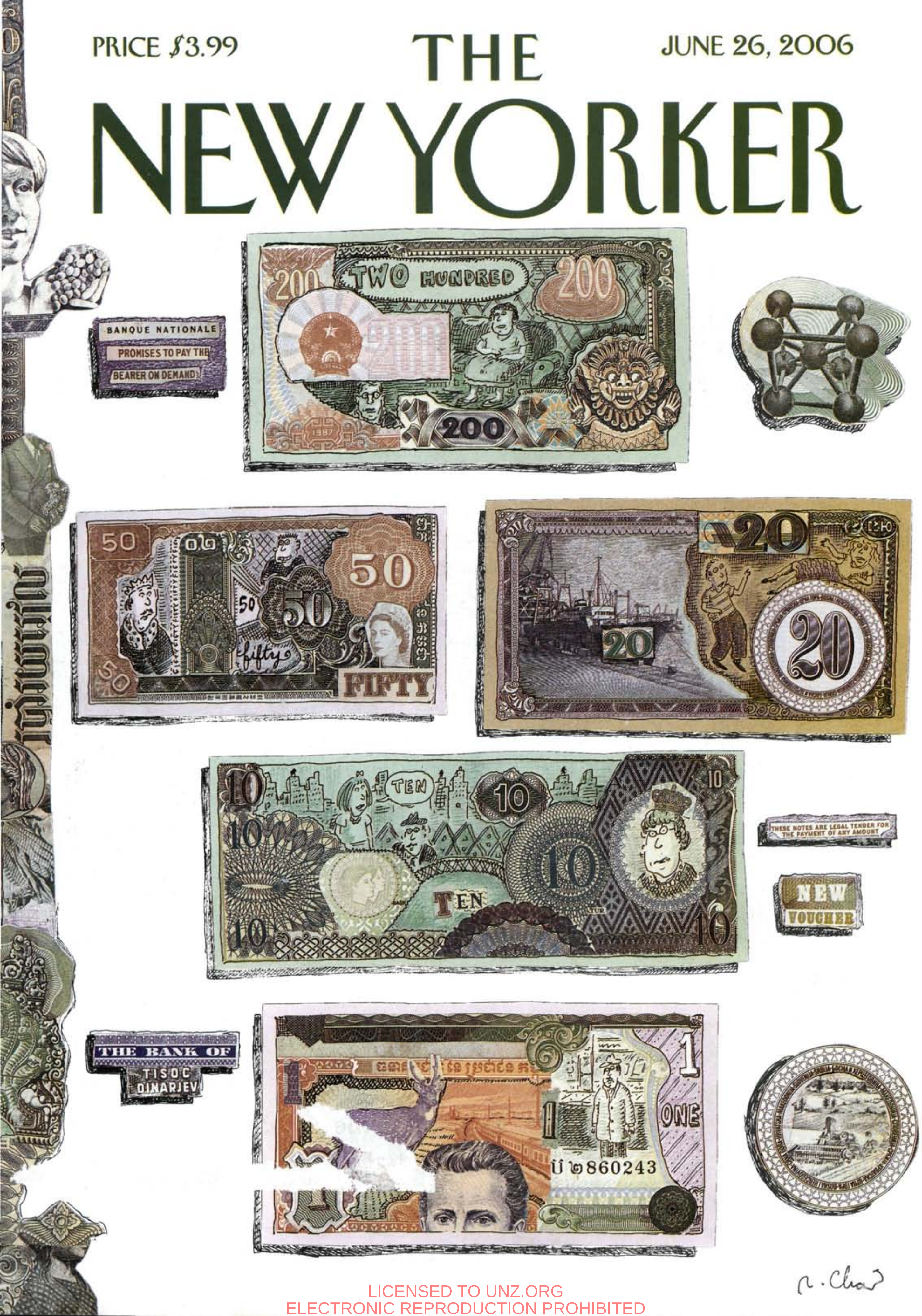
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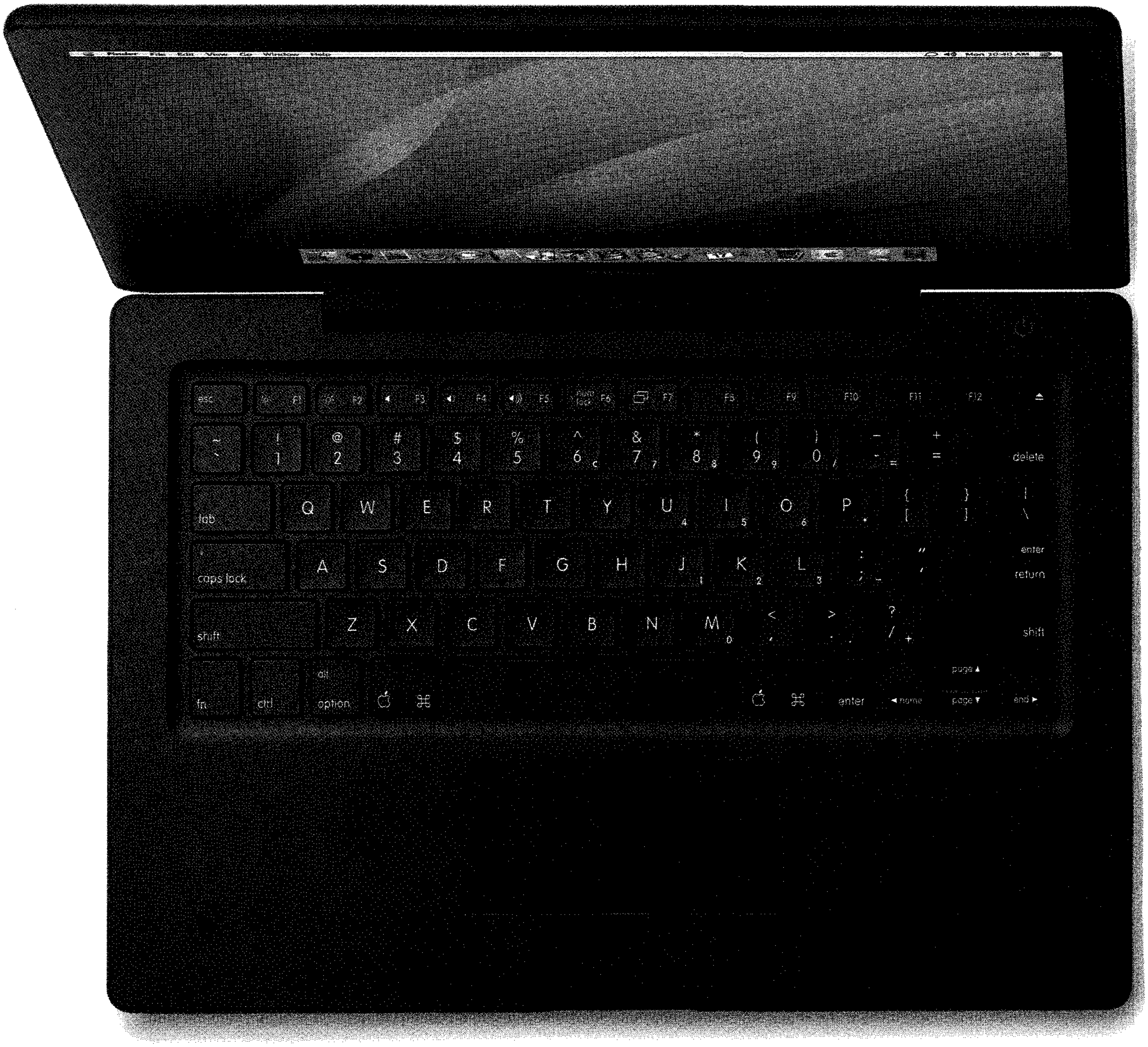
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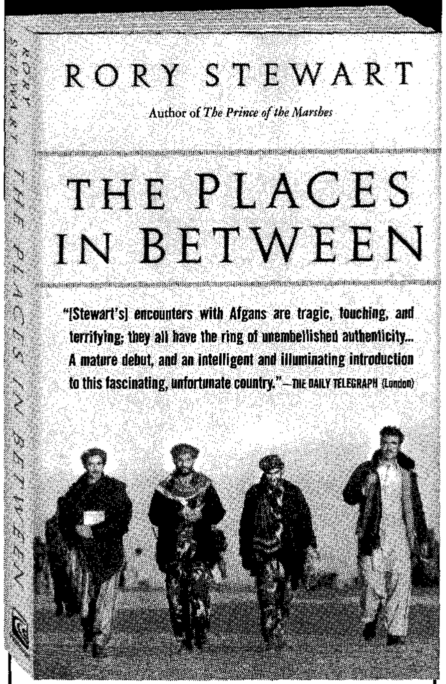
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The New York Times Book Review

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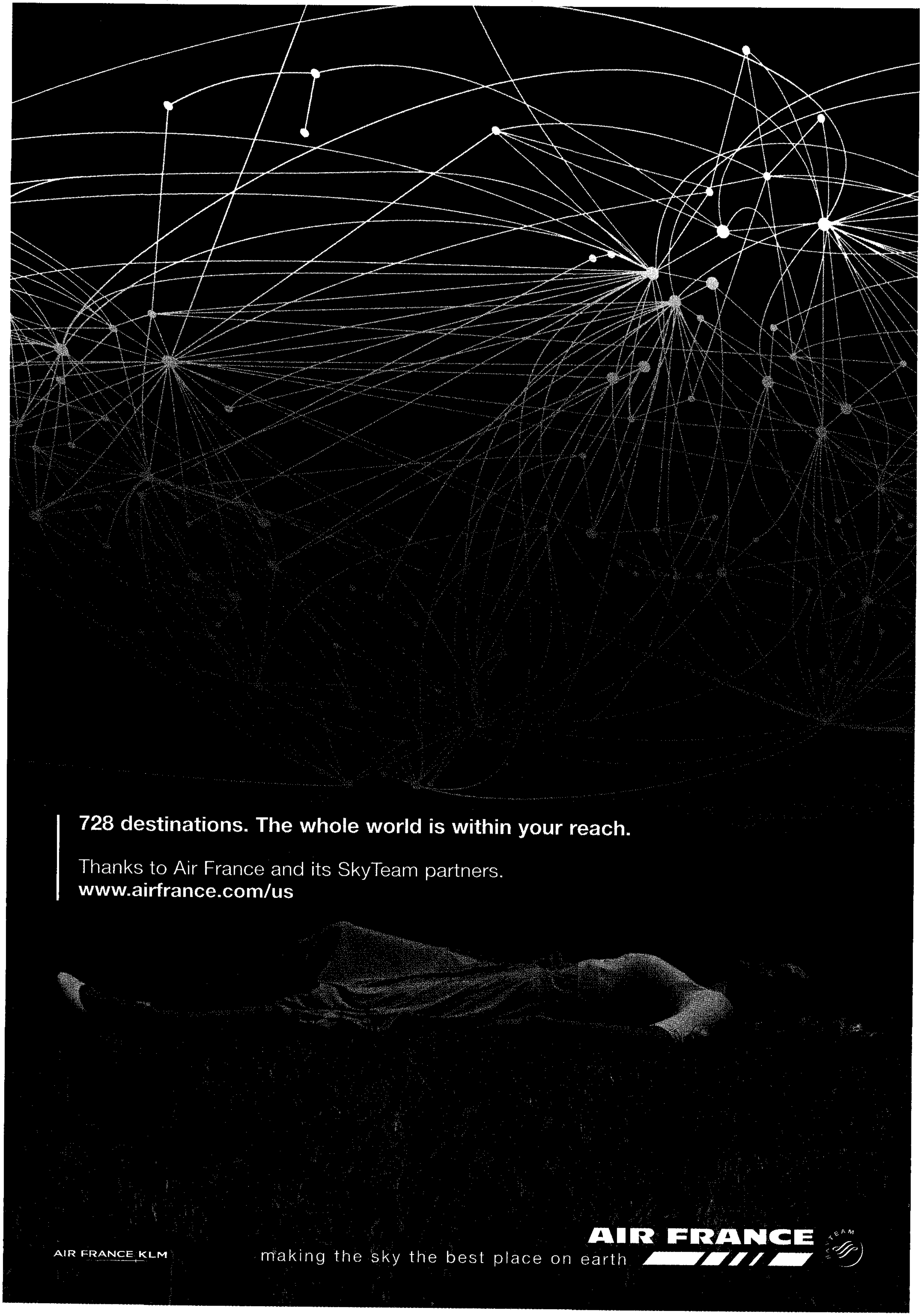

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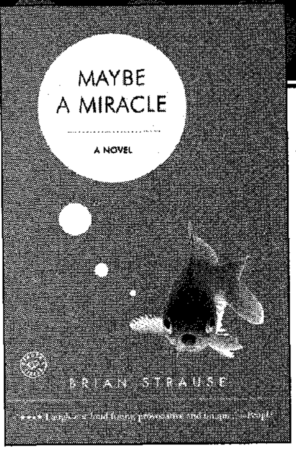

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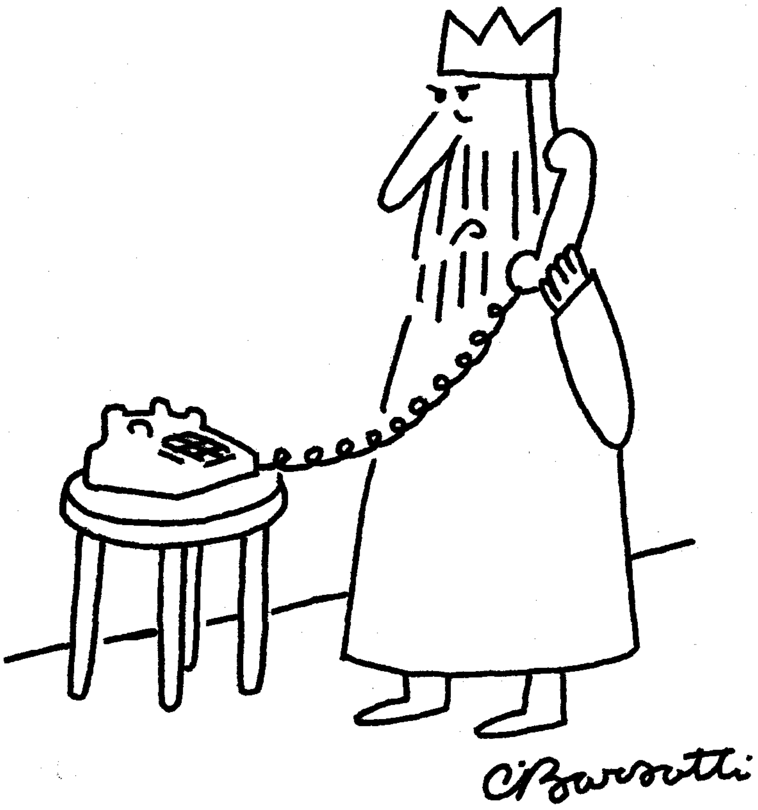
David Sedaris ("What I Learned," p. 37) has contributed to the magazine since 1995. This essay was presented on June 4th, at Princeton University's baccalaureate service. ♦



"You're why I have the moat, Mother."

THE MAIL

POLITICAL STRATEGIES

As Jeffrey Goldberg writes, there is a conflict between Howard Dean's leadership of the Democratic National Committee and Rahm Emanuel's leadership of the Democratic congressional campaign committee ("Central Casting," May 29th). Emanuel's shortsighted and defensive strategy to direct funds to the races he feels are most immediately crucial is the same one that has cost the Democrats dearly in the past six years. Many activists support Dean's grassroots strategy because they recognize that a sixteen- or nineteen-state party can never be a national party, nor can it win. They are aware that it is an enormous challenge to build an organization comparable to what took the Republicans forty years to achieve, and that it may not be possible to succeed completely in eight years. They understand that some patience and persistence is required if the Party is to survive.

Cheryl Krauss
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Goldberg argues that the Democrats must present coherent policy alternatives in order to win the upcoming elections. This may well be true. His claim that "a Gingrich-style Contract with America . . . in its drama and clarity, gave 1994 voters an understanding of national Republican priorities," however, perpetuates a myth that the Contract with America was instrumental in achieving the 1994 Republican gains. Major polls conducted in October of 1994, including those by the New York Times/CBS News, the Pew Research Center, NBC News/Wall Street Journal, and Gallup/CNN, reported that between sixty-eight and seventy-five per cent of respondents had not heard or read anything about it. Whatever clarity and drama the Contract with America obtained was not a cause but a consequence of the election. That year, it is more likely that the House banking scandal, the failure of the Democrats to deliver the promised health-care reforms, and a general sense of corruption and arrogance prompted voters to turn to the Republicans as a viable alternative.

George E. Marcus
Paris, France

ITALIAN DIVERSITY

Oriana Fallaci's belief, which Margaret Talbot reports, that Italy, unlike America, has never been a "mosaic of diversities glued together by a citizenship" must come as a surprise to the countless Italians with such surnames as Greco and Grieco; Lombardo and Lombardi; Tedesco and Tedeschi; Franco, Franchi, and Francese; Albanese; Sassone; and Catalano, not to mention the descendants of Arabs, Phoenicians, and Normans ("The Agitator," June 5th). Italy was a melting pot of Etruscans and Greeks before there was a Rome, and Germanic and Asian invaders contributed to the gene pool at Rome's end. It's just one more thing that Fallaci gets wrong.

William Scott Hommon
Monterey, Calif.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Paul Goldberger describes Renzo Piano's Morgan Library & Museum as having a "satisfying composition" (The Sky Line, May 29th). The building may indeed be aesthetically pleasing, but where is the human element? The entryway is cramped, the once agreeable café has disappeared, and while Piano's addition may be no taller, its imbalance in scale overwhelms the intimacy of the older space. Perhaps the conceptual approach to architecture would overlook these criticisms, but only at the expense of the client the design was meant to serve.

Toni Lee Pomeroy
Charlestown, Mass.

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Cynthia Gorney talks about the future of Roe v. Wade.

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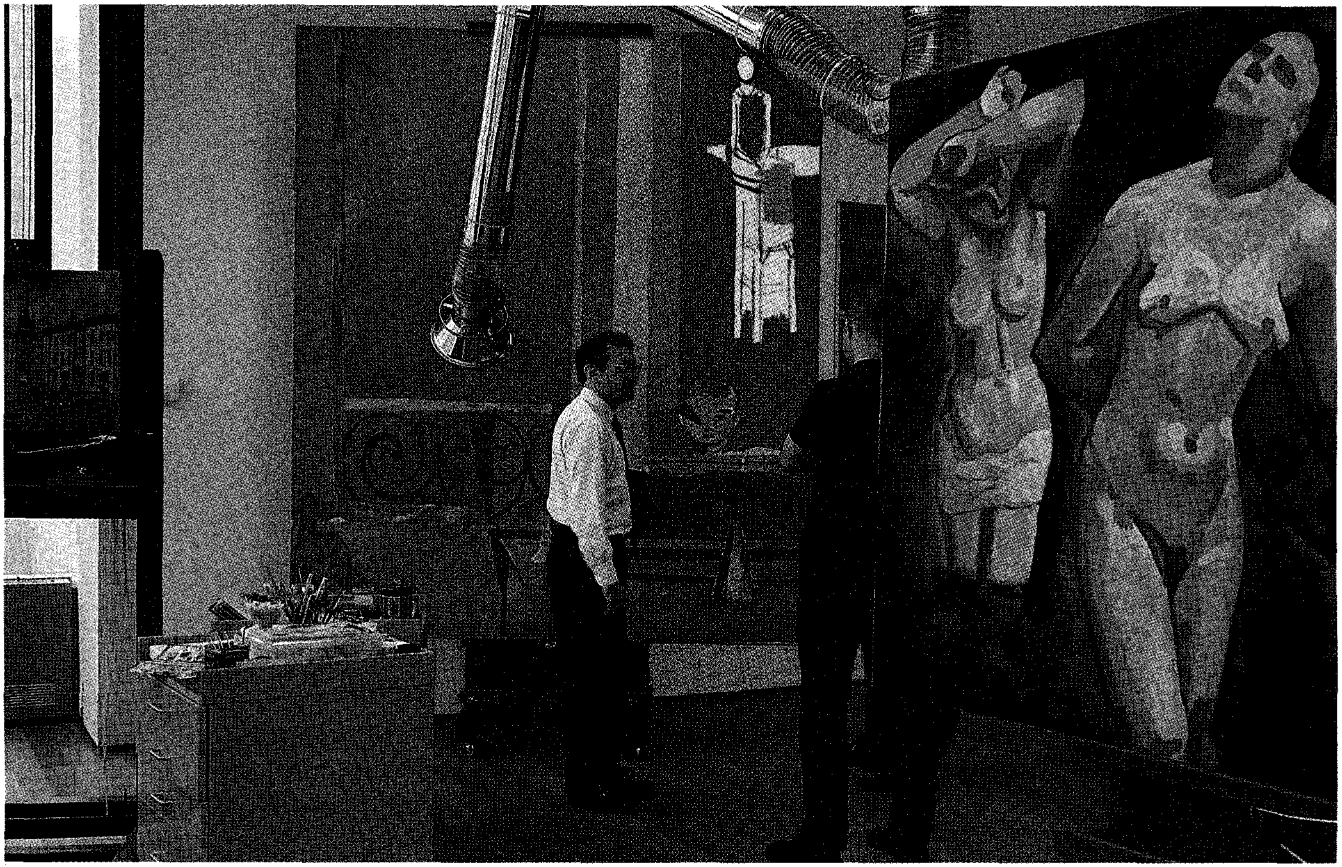

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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THIS WEEK

NIGHT LIFE
SHOWING LOVE

When Arthur Lee of the rock band Love was diagnosed with leukemia, a few of his friends decided to put together a benefit for the man who brought the world the ageless proto-punk song "7 and 7 Is" and the album "Forever Changes." The performers include Robert Plant, Ryan Adams, and Ian Hunter. (See page 9.)

ART
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

In 1901, J. Pierpont Morgan paid the then-astonishing sum of two million francs to buy the center panel of an altarpiece that Raphael had painted and gilded for a Franciscan convent in Perugia, Italy, four hundred years earlier. For a small show that is opening this week, the Met reunites it with its sister panel and predelle, from which it was separated in 1663. (See page 10.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
LADIES' NIGHT

The mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer and the guitarist Sharon Isbin bring down the curtain on this season's "Free for All at Town Hall" series with a concert full of gems from the Spanish repertory (including Manuel de Falla's "Seven Spanish Folk Songs"). (See page 14.)

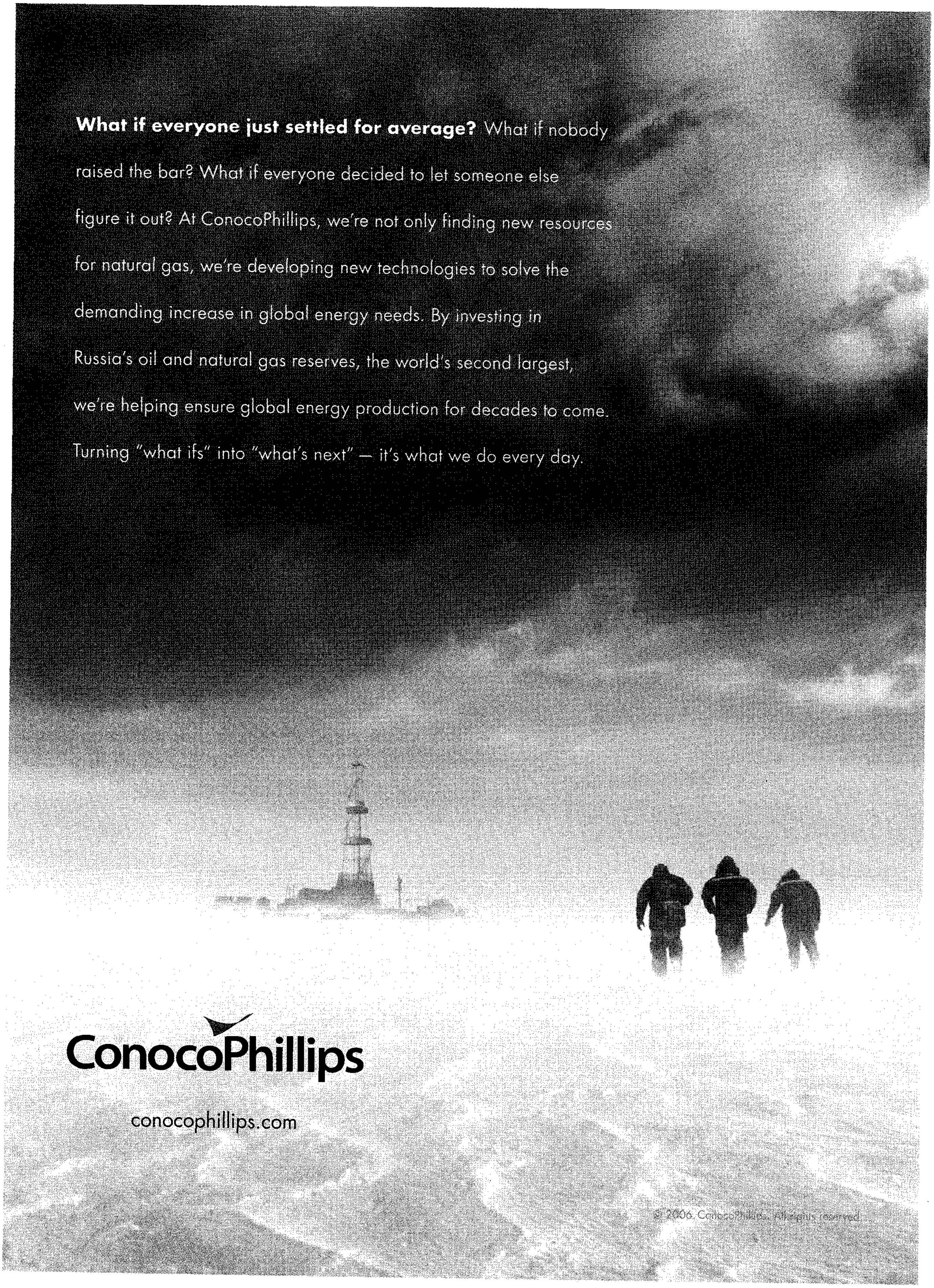
MOVIES
WAR TORN

A man with a rifle crosses a meadow and checks the craters; a woman watches a tank chew up her fields. Vimukthi Jayasundara's "The Forsaken Land," from Sri Lanka, which won the prize for best first feature at Cannes in 2005, conveys the bitter reality of a rural paradise ravaged by war. Its ten-day run at Moving Image begins this week. (See page 17.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
DOWN BY THE SEA

The Mermaid Parade is an annual display of homemade costumes and floats that attracts more than a sprinkling of artsy celebrities (and is lorded over by two: previous kings and queens of the parade have included Queen Latifah and David Johansen). It rolls through Coney Island this Saturday, followed by an after-party, the Mermaid Ball, featuring local bands and sideshow acts. (See page 18.)

The conservation studio at the Museum of Modern Art. Photograph by Yola Monakhov.



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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BIG SHOOT
Koffi Kwahulé's drama details the relationship between an interrogator and his suspect. Gabriella Maione directs. In previews. Opens June 22. (Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

THE BUSY WORLD IS HUSHED
Jill Clayburgh stars in a new play by Keith Bunin, in which the buried past of a theologian is discovered. Mark Brokaw ("The Constant Wife") directs. In previews. Opens June 25. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

GODOT HAS LEFT THE BUILDING
John Griffin wrote this comedy, in which two men try to make sense of the modern world. In previews. Opens June 22. (45 Below, 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101.)

MACBETH
The first offering of the Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park season stars Liev Schreiber in the title role. Moisés Kaufman directs. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750.)

PIG FARM
Roundabout Theatre Company's latest enterprise is a new comedy from the team behind "Urinetown," the writer Greg Kotis and the director John Rando, about pigs and sustainable agriculture. In previews. Opens June 27. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
Labyrinth Theatre Company and the Public Theatre present the world première of a new play by José Rivera (who wrote "The Motorcycle Diaries"), about the Bolivian government's imprisonment of Che Guevara. In previews. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

SECRETS
In Gerald Zipper's drama, a dinner party devolves into depravity for a group of married couples. Ted Mornel directs. In previews. Opens June 25. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

NOW PLAYING

ARABIAN NIGHT
The Play Company presents a bewitching piece of theatrical ague by the German playwright Roland Schimmelpfennig, set in an apartment building where the plumbing has gone haywire and reality is soon to follow. The story begins as an exercise in urban polyphony: each of the five characters acts as a narrator, but, once the men succumb to the enchanted kiss of the lethargic blond beauty on the seventh floor, the play takes a thrilling phantasmagorical leap. Trip Cullman ("Dog Sees God") lends vivid directorial vision to this quintet of nightmares, bringing each of Schimmelpfennig's surreal subplots to a whirligig of intensity. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

BURLEIGH GRIME$
The slicksters and scoundrels in Roger Kirby's Wall Street comedy, among them the knavish sugar daddy Burleigh (Mark Moses) and a crooked TV newswoman (Wendie Malick), occasionally burst into spontaneous fits of tango to illustrate the web of double crosses that entangle and enliven them. Here, the dirty dealings of high finance are every bit as glitzy and corrupt as commonly imagined, able to curdle even the cleanest set of ideals. But once Kirby has established the seductiveness of this world he never changes perspective; the play becomes more of a swinging paean to greed than a satire of it, and, like almost any celebration of a single virtue or vice, it eventually gets tiresome. (New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

The JVC Jazz Festival presents Charles Lloyd's trio Sangam.

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

ELVIS AND JULIET
Mary Willard's star-crossed lovers, Elvis Lesley (Haskell King) and Juliet Jones (Lori Gardner), are brainy Ivy League undergrads who can't wait to get married. But before they say their "I do"s, Elvis takes his prim fiancée to Las Vegas to meet his family, including his dad, Art Lesley (the amusing Fred Willard), Nevada's No. 1 Elvis impersonator; his mom (Pamela Paul), a retired burlesque queen; and Uncle Joey (David Rasche), who specializes in Rat Pack impressions. The fabulous Lesley clan can't understand their son's desire to forgo show biz for a future as a statistical economist. This zingy comedy of manners pits Vegas excess against East Coast smugness, though it's perfectly clear where the playwright's sympathies lie. (June Havoc, 312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444.)

THE HOUSE IN TOWN
Richard Greenberg's new play examines the marriage of a couple living on New York City's Millionaires' Row in 1929. Doug Hughes directs. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

IN THE MATTER OF J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER
Heinar Kipphardt's 1968 docudrama siphons the intrigue from the labyrinthine transcripts of Oppenheimer's infamous 1954 security-clearance hearings before an Atomic Energy Commission board. Carl Forsman's provocative (if overly long) revival puts the men in suits on crisp, sterile platforms that reinforce the McCarthy-era mania for spotless people. Sitting beneath the lawyers and jurors, the mesmerizing, adamantine Oppenheimer (Thomas Jay Ryan) defends his left-leaning friends and his pro-disarmament views, confident in the weight of his superior intellect and common sense. A parade of witnesses (played by fine character actors) paint a world of romantic, unconventional physicists, of men who love their science but—since Hiroshima—increasingly loathe their bombs. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444. Through June 27.)

KING LEAR
Alvin Epstein stars in the Actors' Shakespeare Project's production. Patrick Swanson directs. (La Mama Annex, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710.)

NOTHING
Andrea Hart's excellent adaptation of the British writer Henry Green's novel explores, in the wrangling of two upper-class families, how the clipped upper-class idiom provides in its camp swagger a poise and authority lacking in the aimless lives of the members of the two families. The badinage is toxic but sounds in its blithe detachment like a prose continuation of Noël Coward's "I've Been to a Marvellous Party." In a particularly good British cast, Candida Benson, as the victim, and Sophie Ward, as the vixen, stand out. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

SATELLITES
Michael Greif directs a new play by Diana Son, about an interracial couple who move into a gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood. The ensemble cast includes Sandra Oh. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

SOME GIRL(S)
In Neil LaBute's drama (well directed by Jo Bonney at the Lucille Lortel), Guy (Eric McCormack), a successful thirty-something writer, goes to visit a list of badly treated ex-girlfriends before embarking on his marriage. In a series of four look-alike hotel rooms, Guy encounters his provincial high-school sweetheart, Sam (the excellent Brooke Smith), now a housewife; Bobbi (Maura Tierney, of "ER"), a doctor whom he dated for three years; the brazen Tyler (the appealing Judy Reyes), an artist who has no problem with the idea of extracurricular nooky; and Lindsay (Fran Drescher), a rebarbative older academic. "Some Girl(s)" is yet another astute demonstration of LaBute's uncanny ability to draw pure water from the most poisoned of wells. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/19/06.) (121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

SPRING AWAKENING
Atlantic Theatre Company presents the world première of a new musical adapted from Frank Wedekind's novel. (Reviewed in this issue.) (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

SUSAN AND GOD
The Mint Theatre Company revives Rachel Crothers's 1937 play, about a newly religious socialite who attempts to convert those around her. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

TREASON
Sallie Bingham's new play examines the lives of Ezra Pound and five women who were important to him. Martin Platt directs. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 212-868-4444.)

THE WATER'S EDGE
Kate Burton and Tony Goldwyn star in a new play by Theresa Rebeck. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

OUT OF TOWN

BERKSHIRE THEATRE FESTIVAL
The Main Stage production of "Amadeus," directed by Peter Shaffer, opens the festival. In previews. Opens June 23. (Stockbridge, Mass. For more information, visit www.berkshiretheatre.org. 413-298-5576.)

HELLO, DOLLY!
Tovah Feldshuh stars in the 1964 Tony-winning musical, at the Paper Mill Playhouse. (Millburn, N.J. 973-376-4343.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
Terrence O'Brien directs "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (Garrison, N.Y. For more information, visit www.hvshakespeare.org. 845-265-9575.)

Also Playing

AWAKE AND SING!: Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. Through June 25. **THE COLOR PURPLE:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **THE DROWSY CHAPERONE:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100. **THE FIELD:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **THE HISTORY BOYS:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **RED LIGHT WINTER:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. Through June 25. **SWEENEY TODD:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **THE THREEPENNY OPERA:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300. Through June 25. **WAITING FOR GODOT:** H.S.A. Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444. Through June 25. **THE WEDDING SINGER:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

AVALON
47 W. 20th St. (212-807-7780)—June 26: Perhaps in anticipation of a backlash against the post-punk-fuelled N.Y.C. indie-rock scene, the local trio the **Liars** recorded their third album, "Drum's Not Dead," in Berlin. It finds the band moving in new, unexpectedly subtle directions. Also on the bill are the **Apes,** a four-piece group (drum, bass, organ, and vocals) from Washington, D.C., that plays lovely, coarse rock and roll.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—June 22: **Moogfest.** Robert Moog, the father of the analog synthesizer, who died last August, at the age of seventy-one, may be gone, but his legacy lives on: his instrument changed the face of twentieth-century popular music. **Keith Emerson** (of Emerson, Lake, and Palmer), **Jan Hammer** (the creator of the "Miami Vice" theme song), and other fans pay tribute.

BEACON THEATRE
Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—June 23: Arthur Lee, the lead singer of the seminal band Love, was red-hot in the mid-sixties, lighting up Los Angeles with psychedelic rock. In subsequent decades, his fortunes declined, and by the nineties he was in jail. In recent years, however, he has staged a successful comeback, touring to great acclaim and often performing the entirety of his celebrated 1968 album, "Forever Changes." Earlier this year, he was diagnosed with leukemia, and a number of noted musicians, including **Robert Plant, Ryan Adams, Ian Hunter, Nils Lofgren,** and **Yo La Tengo,** have gathered to help raise money for his medical expenses.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—June 21: The up-and-coming British chanteuse **Corinne Bailey Rae.** June 22: The **U.S. Air Guitar Championships,** an inspiration to adolescents of all ages. June 24: The Gypsy-tinged sounds of **DeVotchka.**

BOWERY POETRY CLUB
308 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (212-614-0505)—The visual artist and singer **Andy Friedman** holds court on Thursdays through July 27.

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!
Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. (718-855-7882, ext. 45)—June 22: **Los Lonely Boys,** three brothers from West Texas whose heroes include Stevie Ray Vaughan and Ritchie Valens. **James Hunter,** a blue-eyed soul singer with a chiselled chin, opens the show. June 24: **Savion Glover** and the **Robert Glasper** trio (see the JVC Jazz Festival).

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE
Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. (212-360-2777)—June 23: The **Refugee All Stars** are six musicians who fled the violence of their homeland, Sierra Leone. Their story is presented in the documentary "The Refugee All Stars of Sierra Leone," which will be screened. June 25: Three acts from Canada—the singer-songwriters **Feist** and **Jason Collet** and the rapper **Buck 65.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—June 22: **Spottiswoode**—a refugee from England, an adventurous songwriter, and a singer with a bit of Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen in his voice—usually performs around town with his six-piece band, the **Enemies.** He recently recorded "S&M," an album of duets with **Riley McMahon,** a guitarist in the Enemies, and this show celebrates that release. The Enemies will be present, along with the pianist **Kenny White.** June 27-28: The feisty post-punk feminist **Jill Sobule.**

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL
Sixth Ave. at 50th St. (212-247-4777)—**Emmylou Harris** and **Mark Knopfler,** two of the most distinctive voices of the country and pop worlds, have a new jewel box of an album out, "All the Road Running." Just back from touring Europe, they are in the midst of a brief Stateside jaunt, with a stop here on June 22.

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—June 21: The musician and performance artist **Laurie Anderson** joins **Chirgilchin,** the national throat-singing champions from the Russian Federal Republic of Tuva, for an acoustic summer-solstice concert.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—June 21: **Espers,** a six-piece collective from Philadelphia, are the latest phenomenon to emerge from the burgeoning psychedelic-folk revival. The band comes to town with a haunting new album, **"Espers II,"** which is full of epic songs (one clocks in at close to nine minutes) that weave together instruments like flute, sleigh bells, and cello with understated fuzz-tone guitar and vintage seventies synthesizers. The most eerie and affecting part of the group's sound, however, is the vocal harmonies, which recall the Fairport Convention in their blending of male and female voices and their spine-chilling beauty.

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-0505)—June 24: The **Liars** and the **Apes** (see Avalon) are joined by the punk provocateur **Alan Vega,** whose seminal work with the duo Suicide blazed a trail for countless electronic bands. June 27: Renowned for cinematic music with a Southwestern atmosphere, the Tucson collective **Calexico** returns with songs from its new album, "Garden Ruin."

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—June 27: State-of-the-art British rap with the **Streets** and **Lady Sovereign.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through July 1: **Jessica Molaskey's** enchanting way with stan-

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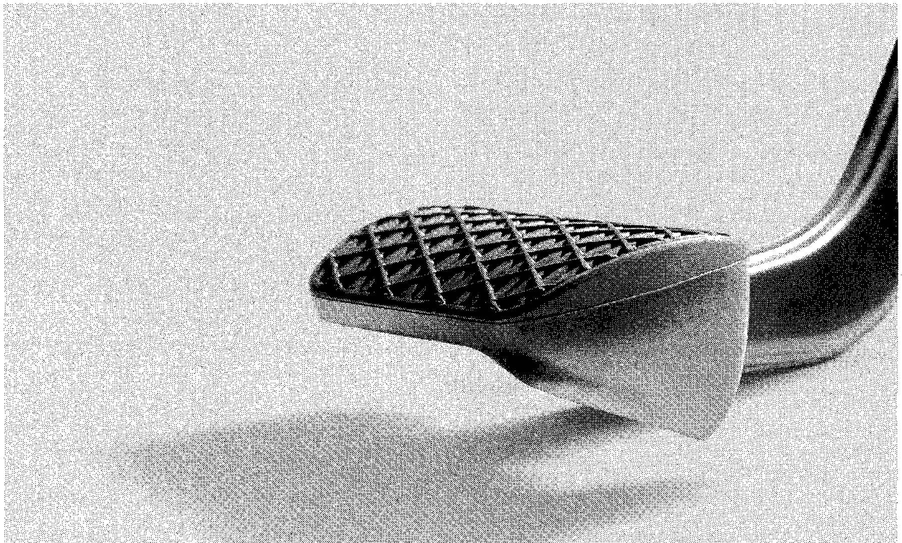

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dards gets the perfect instrumental complement: the sleek trio of her husband, **John Pizzarelli.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA

Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—June 19-22: The astonishing French accordion and bandoneon player **Richard Galliano** coaxes whole worlds of sound from his instruments, mixing Gallic poetry with tough jazz sonorities. His New York Trio includes the bassist **George Mraz** and the drummer **Al Foster.**

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—June 21-24: **Niacin** brings together the drummer **Dennis Chambers,** the electric bassist **Billy Sheehan,** and the keyboardist **John Novello** for an updating of the venerable Hammond-organ-and-rhythm-section sound. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ GALLERY

290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—June 27-28: The pianist **Jon Cowherd** is joined by half of Wayne Shorter's exceptional band: the bassist **John Pattitucci** and the drummer **Brian Blade,** who also happens to be Cowherd's boss in the Brian Blade Fellowship.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—The JVC Jazz Festival turns its sights on Brazil this week. June 21: The **Choro Ensemble** derives its name and inspiration from the nineteenth-century musical idiom that brought together European and native influences. June 22: The percussionist **Cyro Baptista's** group Antropo-Fagia is joined by the guitarist **Romero Lubambo.** June 23: **Trio da Paz** welcomes the pianist and collaborator **Kenny Barron.** June 24: The vocalist **Luciana Souza,** who has made two outstanding duo albums with Brazilian guitarists, is joined by Lubambo.

JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL

The big-name gathering winds up this week. A few highlights follow. June 21: The eighty-year-old **Dave Brubeck** premières a big band at Carnegie Hall. That same night, the guitarist **Ralph Towner** makes a rare New York visit with a solo show downstairs, at Zankel Hall. June 22: The R. & B. legend **Smokey Robinson** returns to Carnegie Hall. Also on that night, at Zankel Hall: **Sangam.** The saxophonist and flutist **Charles Lloyd's** broad instincts come to the fore in his current trio, featuring the trap drummer **Eric Harland** and the tabla master **Zakir Hussain.** The three players find common ground between jazz and Eastern rhythms and modalities, and their playing is highlighted by Lloyd's lyricism, Hussain's virtuosity, and Harland's responsiveness. June 23: **Herbie Hancock** brings four different bands to Carnegie Hall, from an all-star trio to a new neo-fusion band. June 24: The octogenarian Cuban-American innovator **Israel (Cachao) Lopez** celebrates the mambo at Carnegie Hall. Also on June 24: The dancer **Savion Glover** and the piano sensation **Robert Glasper** are at the Prospect Park Band Shell, in Brooklyn. (Prospect Park W. at 9th St.) (For more information, visit www.festivalproductions.net.)

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—June 20-25: The **Lewis Nash** quintet. Nash can lift a band clear off the stage with drum work that is the very essence of clean, modern swing. He's what all contemporary bop drummers should aspire to be. He's joined here by the saxophonist **Steve Wilson,** the trumpeter **Jeremy Pelt,** the pianist **Gerald Clayton,** and the bassist **Peter Washington.**

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Girodet: Romantic Rebel."** Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson (1767-1824), a pupil of Jacques-Louis David's who won the Prix de Rome in the watershed year of 1789, managed the precarious transition from revolutionary to imperial propagandist. Consciously discarding the diamond-hard precision of David's neoclassical style, Girodet adopted flowing lines and a brooding, shadowy palette. The results veer close to kitsch, but the range of subject matter is fascinating, from Rousseauian children at their books to illustrations of Racine and Chateaubriand to portraits of the dashing Turkish, North African, and Caribbean diplomats who served at Napoleon's court. Through Aug. 27. ♦ **"Treasures of Sacred Maya Kings."** Through Sept. 10. ♦ **"The Art of Betty Woodman."** Through July 30. ♦ **"Cai Guo-Qiang on the Roof: Transparent Monument."** The roof garden has reopened for the summer, with four sculptural works by the Chinese-born artist. Among them are "Clear Sky Black Cloud," a timed gunpowder explosion that produces a small cloud of smoke over Central Park each day at noon. Through Oct. 29. ♦ **"Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh."** Through July 9. ♦ **"Kara Walker at the Met: After the Deluge."** Through July 30. ♦ **"Anglo-Mania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion."** Through Sept. 4. ♦ **"On Photography: A Tribute to Susan Sontag."** Through Sept. 4. ♦ **"Raphael at the Metropolitan: The Colonna Altarpiece."** Opens June 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Dada."** Through Sept. 11. ♦ **"Douglas Gordon: Timeline."** One could spend hours in this mini-retrospective—or just minutes. View the works as objects, and they can be apprehended almost instantly; take them as film, and it seems strange that no seating—or popcorn—is provided in the galleries. Basically, this show is about turning movies into sculptures. Gordon is famous for having slowed Hitchcock's "Psycho" down to a twenty-four-hour loop projected on a double-sided screen. He also juxtaposes "The Exorcist" with "The Song of Bernadette" and creates a convincingly erotic blue movie using nothing more than a closeup of his own two hands. Through Sept. 4. ♦ **"Against the Grain: Contemporary Art from the Edward R. Broida Collection."** Through July 10. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"No Limits, Just Edges: Jackson Pollock Paintings on Paper."** Through Sept. 29. ♦ **"Zaha Hadid."** The only Pritzker Prize-winning architect to be compared consistently to an opera singer—O.K., *diva*—takes over the ramps in Wright's rotunda. The installation mirrors Hadid's career, which has often emphasized artistic conceptualizing and imaginary or virtual space over actual construction. Constructivist and Suprematist-inspired paintings, crafted in lieu of elevations and axonometric plans, serve as "testing fields." It's easy to get lost in their weightless, spatial geometries and think, This is architecture? Only after a long trudge up the spiral does one enter the material world of Perspex and foam-core models and photographs of completed buildings, like the Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, in Cincinnati. The ascension is complete at the top of the ramp, where she receives the contemporary architect's ultimate reward: designing flatware, chandeliers, tea services, and futuristic kitchen models. Through Oct. 25. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Full House,"** the Whitney's seventy-fifth-anniversary extravaganza, is opening in stages, starting now, with a floor devoted to Edward Hopper; the rest of the show opens on June 29. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

ASIA SOCIETY

Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—**"Projected Realities,"** an exhibition dedicated to the memory of the Korean video-art trailblazer Nam June Paik (1932-2006), highlights younger Asian artists who have embraced digital technology. Aesthetic and cultural traditions are addressed in Mami Kosemura's lovely images, inspired by Japanese screen painting, and the Taiwanese artist Kuang-Yu Tsui's critiques of austere role models such as the kung-fu master. Kazuhiro Goshima, who has designed video games, takes cues from haiku for his spare animation work, while Bak Ikeda's sci-fi "PiNMeN" dance across several monitors. The most charming work is by the Korean Junebum Park, who superimposes hands over urban video images to create the illusion of divine manipulation—or, perhaps, to reimagine the artist as omniscient creator. Through Aug. 6. ♦ This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Asia Society, which celebrates the occasion with **"A Passion for Asia: The Rockefeller Family Collects,"** a show honoring its patrons. Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

TABLES FOR TWO
MR. CHOW TRIBECA

TARA HARDY

121 Hudson St. (212-965-9500)—When Michael Chow, purveyor of fancy Chinese food and befriender of fancy American people, opened his fifth restaurant last month, in Tribeca, *Fashion Week Daily* devoted a page to the "new glam eatery" and its first-night seating chart. "The social hierarchy," it declared, "is already mapped out." Just getting on the grid can be a hassle in the Mr. Chow universe. You call; you wait; you may be asked to leave a message with your number, name, and hoped-for reservation time. Googling your date before dinner is standard practice, but your dinner Googling you for a date? Perhaps it's best to show up and appeal to the cartographer himself.

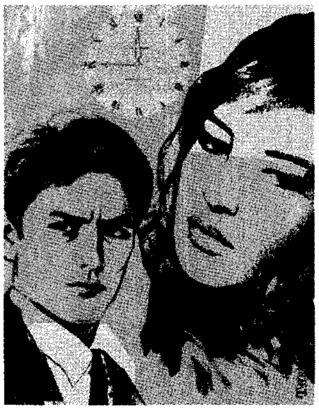
Theoretically, the point of an eatery, however new or glam, is eating, but, at Mr. Chow, getting your hands on a menu is Obstacle No. 2. Under the pretense of hospitality, the waiters—all male, wearing tuxes, speaking with traces of whatever Romance language—prefer to order for you. Just say "land," "sky," or "sea." In any case, count on getting Mr. Chow's signature noodles, which a pasta thrower slaps out near the bar. Sadly, they're as gelatinous as the lo mein at your neighborhood Golden Dragon, and the accompanying meat sauce, oversugared and tomatoey, tastes exactly like Chef Boyardee Beefaroni. The buffalo, on the other hand, is brown and dry and molded into little briquettes—a silver plateful of dung, for $31.50. Stick with the "gambei with goodies," a secret recipe of deep-fried something-or-other that calls to mind late-night binges at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

On a recent night, status-conscious barflies (one man grabbed a nearby woman's top, asking, "Is that Hugo Boss?") thrilled to see Naomi Watts and Liev Schreiber cruising toward seats that might have been their own. (Chow pals are listed in an A-to-Z booklet that comes with the check.) It was a full house at ten, when Karl Lagerfeld appeared. No matter: soon, a troupe of white-suited flunkies cleared a space in the middle of the room and scurried through, carrying a table over their heads. Lagerfeld has said that he never eats after 8 P.M. Lucky for him. (Open daily for dinner. Entrées $25-$42.)

—*Lauren Collins*

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
STILL UNECLIPSED

"The Vision That Changed Cinema," a series of films by and about the ninety-three-year-old director Michelangelo Antonioni that is running at BAM through June 29, abounds with treasures. Some, such as the early features



(including "The Lady Without Camelias," from 1953) and the recent documentaries (among them "Making a Film for Me Is Life," from 1995, by the director's wife, Enrica), are temptingly rare; others, like "L'Eclisse" ("The Eclipse"), gleam more darkly with every viewing. Made in 1962, the film stars Alain Delon as a fast and heartless trader on the Rome stock exchange, eating and drinking on the run when he comes up against Monica Vitti—Antonioni's muse, as becalming as ever. Their efforts at love (oddly maladroit, for so chic a couple) decelerate the movie until it closes in a trancelike series of images, detailing the ephemeral faces of the Eternal City. The film was shot in black-and-white, and is unimaginable in color; the shadows of trees and hallways provide the ink of Antonioni's style.

—Anthony Lane

DAHESH MUSEUM OF ART
580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. (212-759-0606)—On July 1, 1798, General Napoleon Bonaparte, then twenty-nine years old, arrived in Egypt with conquest on his mind; by the following August he had returned to France unvictorious, and the last of his troops followed in September of 1801. The ill-conceived campaign can nonetheless be chalked up as a triumph, thanks to the work of scores of artists, scholars, and naturalists who accompanied the soldiers to Egypt and documented everything they saw—ruins, mummified heads, seaweed, native costumes, insects, boats—in the mighty twenty-three-volume "Déscription de l'Égypte." For **"Napoleon on the Nile: Soldiers, Artists, and the Rediscovery of Egypt,"** meticulous engravings from the first and second folio editions are supplemented with commemorative medallions, letters to and from Napoleon on administrative banalities, romanticizing paintings from the period, and James Gillray's acid cartoons mocking the emperor-general's hubris. It's a fitting project for the museum, whose collections are rich in Orientalism; if Gérôme's campaign portraits excite you, there are more Gérôme canvases around the corner. Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

DRAWING CENTER
35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166)—**"Eva Hesse: Drawing."** Through July 15. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"Unknown Weegee."** Through Aug. 27. ♦ **"Atta Kim: On-Air."** Through Aug. 27. ♦ **"Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt."** Through Aug. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Eva Hesse: Sculpture."** Through Sept. 17. ♦ **"Max Liebermann: From Realism to Impressionism."** Through July 30. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 9, and Fridays, 11 to 3. For the duration of the Hesse show, the museum will also be open on Saturdays, from 11 to 5:45, with no charge for admission.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Summer-hours warning: Many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

WANGECHI MUTU
From the Limbourg brothers to Bruegel to Judy Chicago, the festive banquet has proved to be a durable art trope. Mutu, working with the British architect David Adjaye, turns it into a gothic tale of material excess, wealth, and greed. Animal pelts are nailed to the wall; dark wood panelling is riddled with bullet holes; a scrim, printed by Mutu with designs suggesting decorative textiles or bacteriological closeups, covers the windows. The centerpiece is a long oval table, over which wine bottles, wrapped in fur straps, are suspended. Their contents drip irregularly onto the table and bleed onto the floor. The placement of this macabre tableau on the ground floor of the gallerist Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn's culturally advanced palazzo goes unmentioned, but it is hardly unnoticeable. Through July 7. (Salon 94, 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212.)

Short List

JAMES CASTLE / WALKER EVANS: Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550. Through Aug. 11.
ARTHUR DOVE: Alexandre, 41 E. 57th St. 212-

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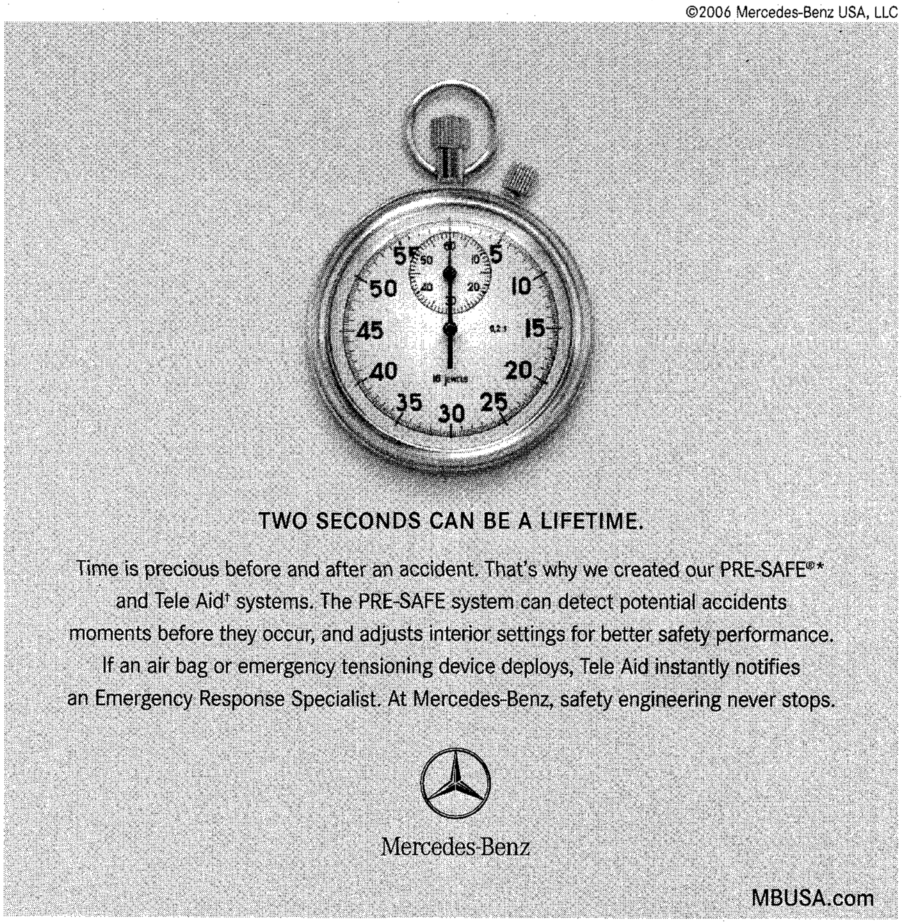

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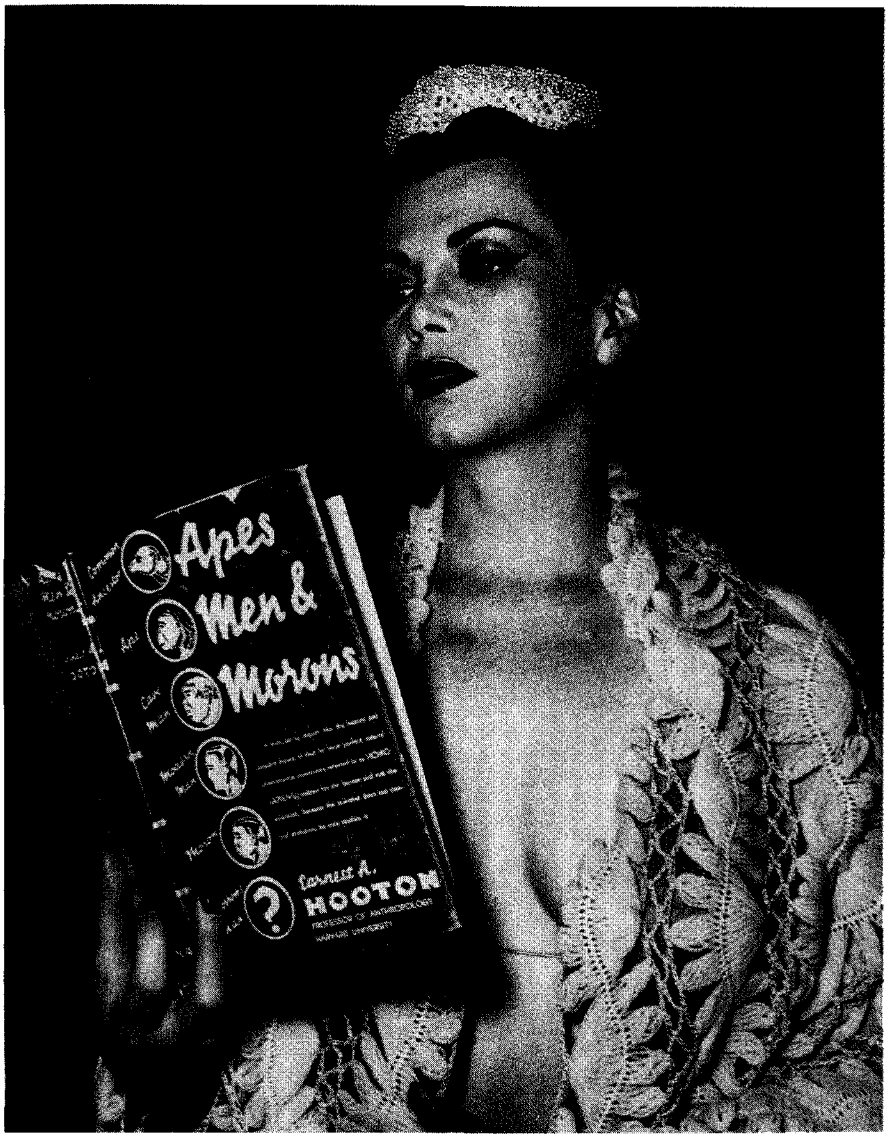

Weegee's 1944 photograph of the showgirl Sherry Britton, at I.C.P.

755-2828. Through June 23. **GUY PÈNE DU BOIS:** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave. 212-535-5767. Through June 30. **MAN RAY:** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 212-752-1223. Through June 30. **LOUIS STETTNER:** Benrubi, 41 E. 57th St. 212-888-6007. Through July 29. **JOHN WESLEY:** Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677. Through June 23.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

MARK DI SUVERO
Exhibitions do not often consist of a single sculpture, but di Suvero's giant I-beam constructions defy the ordinary. More comfortable in outdoor settings, they have to be coaxed and wedged into interior spaces. The one here, twenty-seven feet high and titled "Time Out for Nicole d'Oresme," after the medieval mathematician who invented coördinate geometry, rises to within inches of the ceiling. Circles of steel nestled in the armpit of the behemoth break up the linearity of five beams, whose composition looks like the results of a giant's game of pick-up sticks. The sense is of an elaborate ceremonial arch or a grand old tree, a heavy structure that has a paradoxical feeling of lightness. A series of prints with sampled sculptural images and expressionistic splashes add a bit of color. Through July 28. (Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.)

JACKIE GENDEL
Dead Presidents, friends, and iconic portrait subjects are conflated—or sometimes stacked three or four deep—in these deceptively simple, faux-naïve paintings. Echoes of Picasso and Leonardo appear in watered-down apparitions. Facial features drawn in drab brown paint recall Alex Katz's minimal aesthetic, although Gendel's palette is more earthy brown and vegetal than pastel. The underlying subject, however, isn't the figure or its identity but the process of painting itself, and how, for the painter, images appear, disappear, and reappear in the course of creation. The commissioned portraitist must commit to some likeness of his sitter, but Gendel's subjects are chameleons who can't make up their minds what gender, setting, or century they inhabit. Through July 1. (Bailey, 511 W. 25th St. 212-989-0156.)

ZAHA HADID
The starchitect Hadid shows a series of paintings and vinyl murals, in conjunction with the retrospective of her work on view at the Guggenheim. Cool, curvilinear, and glittering in silver, the renderings—of Hadid's planned Zaragoza Bridge project, among several others—are made by printing virtual renderings onto chrome-polyester panels and then spraying them with Chinese lacquers, watercolors, and automotive and stained-glass paints. Standing as a tangible centerpiece among these space-age ideas, her streamlined cast-aluminum tête-à-tête bench looks like a Nike swoosh crossed with a church pew. In a good way. Through July 29. (Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 212-633-6999.)

SHARON LOCKHART
Lockhart may be intelligent and engaged, but her photographs have often been so caught up in ideas about picture-making that they don't communicate much of anything. Her new project, "Pine Flat," is different. Working in the rural California community where she lived, Lockhart made a series of brief fixed-camera films of children in the landscape—waiting for a bus, clambering up a snow-covered hill, making out in a field—and a group of large-scale studio portraits. The films are quietly contemplative but quite seductive, and the full-figure portraits are wonderful: Mike Disfarmer refracted through Rineke Dijkstra. Unlike Loretta Lux's fragile, doll-like European concoctions a block away, these young Americans are sturdy, spunky, and ready for the world. Through June 24. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300.)

MARC YANKUS
Yankus's color photographs of cityscapes, landscapes, and attractive young men and women may not be strikingly original, but self-conscious echoes of Bill Jacobson and David Armstrong tend to dissipate under closer inspection. Using a computer program, Yankus overlays many of his images with textures borrowed from mottled and yellowing pieces of paper, often blank book pages that give the finished work a curious patina and a burnished glow. This gimmick only works because Yankus underplays it, keeping the mood mellow, cool, and casually erotic. Through June 24. (ClampArt, 531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020.)

"INFECTED LANDSCAPE"
Four photographers investigate the way politics and poverty imprint themselves on the landscape, both subtly, as in Anthony Haughey's shots of Northern Ireland and Shai Kremer's views of fortified or scarred sites in Israel, and to devastating effect, as in Misty Keasler's pictures of Guatemala City's vast, inhabited garbage dump. Like all the artists here, Keasler finds fraught, tattered beauty in her subject; rising out of a romantic mist, her makeshift tent and mountains of refuse look like a ragpicker's idea of Brigadoon. Atta Kim's bucolic vista of the lush D.M.Z. between North and South Korea, made over a period of eight hours, has a similarly deceptive softness, disturbed only by the barbed-wire fence in the foreground. Through June 30. (Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410.)

Short List

JEFF BURTON: Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335. Through June 24. **TILL GERHARD:** Holm, 524 W. 24th St. 212-627-7444. Through June 24. **PAUL ETIENNE LINCOLN:** Burgin, 243 W. 18th St. 212-462-2668. Through June 23. **LORETTA LUX:** Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370. Through June 24. **RICHARD SERRA:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through Aug. 11. **LAURIE SIMMONS / ANDREW GRASSIE:** Sperone Westwater, 415 W. 13th St. 212-999-7337. Through June 30. **"AN ONGOING LOW-GRADE MYSTERY":** Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through June 23. **"REGENERATION: 50 PHOTOGRAPHERS OF TOMORROW":** Aperture, 547 W. 27th St. 212-505-5555. Through June 22.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
In the final week of its spring repertory season, the company presents works that span its history, from a ballet performed on opening night at City Center in 1948—Balanchine's luminous "Symphony in C"—to its latest "Diamond Project" premières, by Jorma Elo and the exciting Russian choreographer Alexei Ratmansky. The varied assortment encompasses pieces by Jerome Robbins (including his murderous insect ballet, "The Cage"), Peter Martins (last season's "Friandises"), and Christopher Wheeldon (last season's stylish "Klavier"), as well as Bal-

anchine's sumptuous "Vienna Waltzes." Casts are announced on the company's Web site a week in advance. ♦ June 21 at 7:30: "Russian Seasons," "In Memory of . . . ," and "Western Symphony." ♦ June 22 at 8: "Slice to Sharp," "The Cage," "Andantino," and "Western Symphony." ♦ June 23 at 8: "Divertimento from 'Le Baiser de la Fée,' " "Klavier," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ June 24 at 2: "Klavier," "In Memory of . . . ," and "Western Symphony." ♦ June 24 at 8: "Divertimento from 'Le Baiser de la Fée,' " "Friandises," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ June 25 at 3: "Symphony in C" and "Vienna Waltzes." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

On Thursday, Julio Bocca will take his last bow on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House after once again losing his beloved Manon (danced by the dramatic and beautiful Alessandra Ferri) to lust, greed, and the fetid Louisiana swamps. Next week will be Kevin McKenzie's 2000 adaptation of the perennial favorite "Swan Lake," which features an expanded role for the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart—not a bad move for a company with more than its share of fabulous male dancers. Casts are listed on the company's Web site. ♦ June 21 at 2: "Manon" (with Diana Vishneva and Vladimir Malakhov). ♦ June 21 at 8: "Manon" (with Xiomara Reyes and Ángel Corella). ♦ June 22 at 8: "Manon" (with Ferri and Bocca). ♦ June 23 at 8: "Manon" (with Vishneva and Malakhov). ♦ June 24 at 2: "Manon" (with Reyes and Corella). ♦ June 24 at 8: "Manon" (with Julie Kent and José Manuel Carreño). ♦ June 26 at 8: "Swan Lake" (with Irina Dvorovenko and Maxim Beloserkovsky). ♦ June 27 at 8: "Swan Lake" (with Gillian Murphy and Corella). (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 15.)

PASCAL RIOULT DANCE THEATRE

In a program of four finely tuned dances at the Joyce, the French-born choreographer alternates between lush romanticism and cool analytics. In "If by Chance," set to the jazzy stylings of Jacques Loussier's improvisations on Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23, the classical movements have a loose energy, as if the dancers had just been drinking champagne. The rest of the bill is sleek and knifelike: "Black Diamond" (2003), a duet for two spidery women set to Stravinsky's "Duo Concertante"; last year's angular, stark "Les Noces"; and Rioult's 2002 "Bolero," an enginelike concatenation of metallic silver bodies. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. June 20 at 7:30, June 21 at 7, June 22-23 at 8, June 24 at 2 and 8, and June 25 at 2 and 7:30.)

DANCE BY NEIL GREENBERG

Twenty-five years into the AIDS pandemic, Greenberg reprises one of the dance world's most acclaimed and understated responses to that crisis, his 1994 "Not-About-AIDS-Dance." Spare, poised sequences, performed mostly in silence, are inflected by projected text that relates information about the dancers and what happened in their lives while those formal sequences were being constructed. Some of the text is flip and self-mocking; some, such as the revelation of Greenberg's own H.I.V.-positive status, is moving in its matter-of-factness. The choreographer's all-male dance "Quartet with Three Gay Men" also premières. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. June 21-24 at 7:30 and June 25 at 4.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA

The flamenco troupe, led by Soledad Barrio and her husband, Martín Santangelo, returns with "Cielo de Tierra" ("Heaven of Earth"). (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-352-3101. June 21-23 at 8, June 24 at 2 and 8, and June 25 at 2 and 5. Through July 30.)

"REVEALED"

The newest work by the choreographer and media artist Stephan Koplowitz will take place in a walk-in camera obscura. In a darkened room, big enough for twenty people, light entering from a single opening projects an inverted image of nine dancers interacting and moving through the space that lies between the atrium of the World Financial Center and the Hudson River. (220 Vesey St. 212-945-0505. June 22-25 at noon.)

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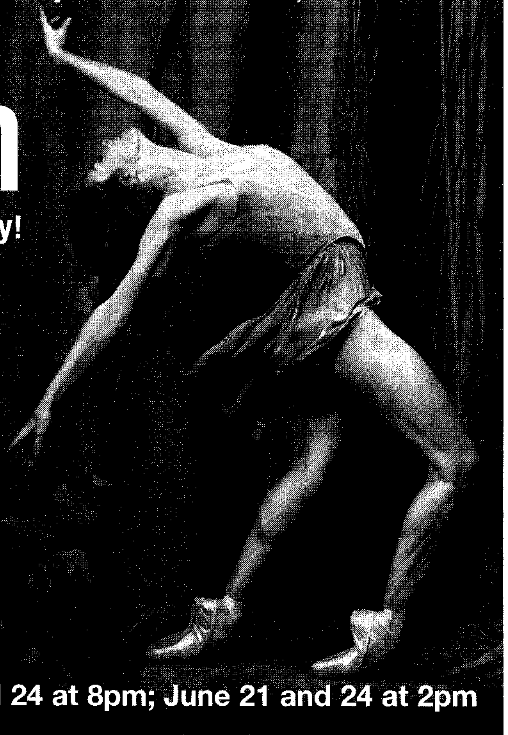
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Alessandra Ferri in *Manon*. Photo by Fabrizio Ferri.

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RAFAEL AMARGO
The Spanish flamenco heartthrob Rafael Amargo, now thirty, borrowed the poet Federico García Lorca's text and his title—"Poeta en Nueva York"—for his 2002 dance-theatre spectacle, now getting its New York première at City Center. As the recorded voices of Spanish actors read from the poems, Amargo and his company dance to the rhythms of Lorca's language while film footage of New York in 1929 flickers on the wall and eight musicians add their own mournful and defiant notes. With the special guest Rasta Thomas. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. June 22-23 at 8.)

CORBINDANCES
The dancer Patrick Corbin's company has its New York début. In an evening of three new works, Corbin eschews wings, putting the usual offstage stretching and panting into his stage pictures. That naturalism is integral to "Bathing Jeff, Part I," a candid piece about Corbin witnessing the death of his longtime friend and Paul Taylor colleague Jeff Wadlington. Twelve unmatched dancers in everyday clothes create structured but highly personal improvisations, as Corbin sits at a school desk, reading from his own memoir. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. June 22-25 at 8.)

KIMBERLY BARTOSIK
In "Home in the Neon Heat," Bartosik—an alumna of the Merce Cunningham company and the Wally Cardona Quartet—sees through a broken prism. A wartime world gone to pieces, a house divided against itself, emerges in fragmented phrases and fierce, short-lived struggles for four dancers (three of whom are also former and present Cunningham members). (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. June 22-25 at 8:30.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW
Spain's CND2, the fresh-faced and strongly trained junior company led by Nacho Duato, returns to the Berkshires with three dances. "Violon d'Ingres," a U.S. première by the co-artistic director Tony Fabre, is a delightful, kids-horsing-around romp, matching each note in a suite of short pieces by Bach, Vivaldi, and Paganini. Duato's "Remansos" expands—to somewhat diminishing effect—the striking and similarly titled 1997 male trio he made for American Ballet Theatre, while his "Rassemblement" draws on Afro-Haitian slave songs to fashion handsomely stylized scenes of repression and resistance. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. June 21-23 at 8, June 24 at 2 and 8, and June 25 at 2.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY OPERA: "GLORY DENIED"
Tom Cipullo, one of New York's favorite song composers, has spread his wings into the operatic world with this work (previously heard in City Opera's new-music series, "Vox"), based on Tom Philpott's book about Colonel Jim Thompson, the troubled Vietnam veteran who was America's longest-held prisoner of war. Charles Maryan directs; Richard Byrne, Jody Sheinbaum, Chris Pedro Trakas, and Lucy Yates are featured in the cast. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. June 26 at 8.)

RECITALS

ANTHONY DE MARE: "UNITIES"
The passionate pianist, committed to the advancement of gay rights and gay composers, offers a celebratory program of music by Leonard Bernstein, Lou Harrison, and Fred Hersch, along with works by such supportive friends (and formidable musical radicals) as Jerome Kitzke and Frederic Rzewski. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Ave. June 22 at 6:30. No tickets required.)

BARGEMUSIC
Jeffrey Swann, an excellent pianist who lectures on the great Romantic composers, has had the barge to himself for a run of all-Chopin concerts. June 22 at 7:30: "Toward the Future," a program featuring such visionary works as the Three Mazurkas, Op. 56, the Barcarolle, Op. 60, and the Two Nocturnes, Op. 62. ♦ June 23 at 7:30: In "Dramatic Narrative," Swann finishes up the series with such substantial works as the Sonata No. 2 in B-Flat Minor, Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49, and the Scherzos Nos. 2 and 3. ♦ June 24 at 7:30: The Amernet String Quartet offers canonical works by Shostakovich (the Third Quartet) and Brahms (the Quartet in B-Flat Major, Op. 67) along with Frederick Kaufman's recent Quartet No. 6, "The Urban." ♦ June 25 at 4: The accordionist Will Holshouser stands out in a slightly exotic program featuring a sheaf of works by Piazzolla (including "Jealousy" and "Histoire du Tango"), Albéniz, Brahms, and Shostakovich (two waltz arrangements). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

FREE FOR ALL AT TOWN HALL: SUSANNE MENTZER AND SHARON ISBIN
The guitar-and-voice duet, a genre that died out in England and most of Europe, survived in Spain's folk-oriented musical culture well into the twentieth century. The mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer and the guitarist Sharon Isbin perform an array of vivid works by Falla, Albéniz, Granados, and Rodrigo. (123 W. 43rd St. June 25 at 5. Free tickets, which are limited to two per customer, will be distributed on the day of the concert beginning at noon.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
A real visiting guest star—the violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, who has been redefining her career of late—joins several of the group's regular musicians in a typical program of favorites and novelties that features pieces by Stamitz, Rosetti, and Dvořák (the Quintet in G Major for String Quartet and Double Bass). (Jewish Community Center in Manhattan, Amsterdam Ave. at 76th St. 212-799-1259. June 26 at 8.)

AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM
The Forum, mixing some of the best of Viennese and New York culture, offers a concert by the veteran soprano Jane Marsh, who, accompanied by Linda Hall, sings art songs by two inspired Neo-Romantics, Ned Rorem and the late Austrian master Gottfried von Einem. (11 E. 52nd St. June 26 and June 29 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300, ext. 222.)

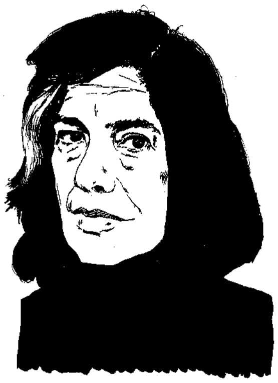
NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS
This storied summer concert series, which offers its performances in Central Park's gloriously old-fashioned Naumburg Band Shell, begins with a chamber program performed by the Imani Winds, an acclaimed African- and Latin-American wind quintet with a wide-ranging repertory who perform works by Mozart (the Quintet for Piano and Winds), Ravel (an arrangement of "Le Tombeau de Couperin"), and Paquito D'Rivera ("Aires Tropicales"). (Concert Ground, south of 72nd St. June 27 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

OUT OF TOWN

MAVERICK CONCERTS
The legendary, no-frills series, held in a crazily inspired Fijian-style meetinghouse dating from Woodstock's heady days as an art colony, offers renowned artists on a shoestring budget. June 24 at 6: The conductor Alexander Platt, the Maverick's music director, and the pianist Frederic Chiu kick off the season with a program of Mozart piano concertos (Nos. 11-13), offered in the composer's intimate chamber versions. ♦ June 25 at 3: The American String Quartet—an elegant, commanding, and perpetually underrated ensemble—offers more Mozart, capping off a concert of works by Haydn and Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, a satiric and wistful set of miniatures)

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK ON SONTAG

As you enter the intimate suite of galleries that house the Met's "On Photography: A Tribute to Susan Sontag," the first picture you see is Peter Hujar's 1975 portrait of the writer lying down. Even in repose, hands clasped behind her head, Sontag is watchful, tensed; her body may be at rest, but her mind is working. Throughout the show, excerpts from her writings about photography inspire groupings of images from the Met's collection. The Hujar, along with Napoleon Sarony's languid Oscar Wilde, Julia Margaret Cameron's grizzled Tennyson, and two strips of Andy Warhol photo-booth self-portraits, illustrates a quote nearby: "Photographs instigate, confirm, seal legends. Seen through photographs, people become icons of themselves." You may not agree with everything Sontag had to say on this subject (she calls August Sander's "People of the Twentieth Century" "one of the most truly abstract works in the history of photography"), but her voice couldn't be more reasonable, persuasive, or precise. She's the ideal tour guide for a brief history of a medium she helped to illuminate.



—*Vince Aletti*

with the third of the lofty "Prussian" Quartets (in F Major, K. 590). (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL

Westchester's elegant alternative to Tanglewood has become a multifaceted festival that packs an appealingly diverse range of events into a relatively short schedule. June 24 at 8:30: The excellent Orchestra of St. Luke's, Caramoor's regular band, will be led by Peter Oundjian in a gala opening-night concert that features music by Beethoven (the sprightly Symphony No. 8), Mendelssohn (the Violin Concerto, with Joshua Bell), and this year's composer-in-residence, John Musto. ♦ June 25 at 4:30: Peter Schickele, up to his old tricks, joins two old friends (the singers Michèle Eaton and David Düsing) to offer "P.D.Q. Bach: His Life, Legacy, and Leftovers," a putative life survey of the fictional composer and comedic cynosure. (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN

The chamber-music festival's latest concert pairs the veteran oboist Humbert Lucarelli, an old friend of Music Mountain, with the up-and-coming Amernet String Quartet for a program of music by Shostakovich (the Third Quartet), Mozart (the Oboe Quartet in F Major), and Beethoven (the Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. June 25 at 3.)

MOVIES

OPENING

CLICK

Adam Sandler and Kate Beckinsale star in this romantic comedy, about a man whose remote control permits him to fast-forward or rewind through his life. Directed by Frank Coraci. Opening June 23. (In wide release.)

THE GREAT NEW WONDERFUL

Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening June 23. (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)

HIDDEN BLADE

A samurai drama, directed by Yoji Yamada. In Japanese. Opening June 23. (Cinema Village.)

LEONARD COHEN: I'M YOUR MAN

A documentary about the singer-songwriter, directed by Lian Lunson. Opening June 21. (Film Forum.)

THE ROAD TO GUANTÁNAMO

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 23. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

TWO DRIFTERS

A drama, directed by João Pedro Rodrigues, about a man and a woman who console each other after the death of their bisexual lover. In Portuguese. Opening June 23. (Quad Cinema.)

WAIST DEEP

Tyrese and the Game star in this action drama, directed by Vondie Curtis-Hall, about an ex-con whose son is kidnapped by a crime boss. Opening June 23. (In wide release.)

WASSUP ROCKERS

Larry Clark directed this drama, about teen skateboarders in South Central Los Angeles. Opening June 23. (Angelika Film Center.)

NOW PLAYING

THE BREAK-UP

This romantic comedy, directed by Peyton Reed, stars Vince Vaughn, looking a little paunchy, as a hyperarticulate Chicago tour guide with loutish habits, and Jennifer Aniston, looking great naked from the rear, as an art-gallery saleswoman who wants peace and order. They buy a condo together, and quarrels ensue—many quarrels, some of them nicely sustained. The snippy-snappy dialogue is good enough to make you regret that the movie wasn't better thought out as a piece of comic construction. The main trouble: what each one does professionally never feeds into the plot, so we are left, again and again, with nothing but the Relationship. Eventually, the two run out of arguments, and the movie turns earnest and dull, but there are good bits nonetheless. With Jon Favreau, who renews his onscreen partnership with Vaughn, and Judy Davis, as Aniston's dragon-lady boss.—*David Denby* (In wide release.)

CARS

The new Pixar project depicts an America populated wholly by cars. They do not merely cram the roads; they run the gas stations and the diners, too. (If you expect that such a fantasy must, in these fuel-nervous times, have a satirical edge, think again.) Owen Wilson, tacking between the smarmy and the plaintive, provides the voice of Lightning McQueen—a cocky, friendless race car who, after a bunch of mishaps, winds up in a small town and there, with the help of some newfound companions, finds his purpose in life. All of which is a reminder that Pixar is a subsidiary of Disney. The digital detailing is often astonishing, but much of the sly wit that perked up "Toy Story" and "The Incredibles" seems to have drained away, and, in the end, the strain of having to care about the fate of grinning automobiles is just too much. Can it be right that a film of this sophistication should remind us of "Thomas the Tank Engine"? Other voices belong to Bonnie Hunt, Larry the Cable Guy, and a growling Paul Newman.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/19/06.) (In wide release.)

THE DA VINCI CODE

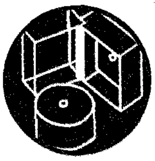
Ron Howard's film of Dan Brown's novel is faithful to both the spirit and the letter of the original. Such loyalty will be balm to the souls of his forty million readers, who have come to accept the book as holy writ. Others will greet the news as they would an outbreak of the plague. The movie stars Tom Hanks as Robert Langdon, an American professor who, partnered with a young French cryptographer (Audrey Tautou), untangles a knot of clues. These begin with a corpse in the Louvre, continue in a country house owned by a conspiracy expert (Ian McKellen), lead to London for a touch of local color, and end in a Scottish church, where the true descendant of Jesus is revealed, to regrettable sounds of mirth in the audience. Our heroes' opponents include a devilish bishop (Alfred Molina) and a murderous monk (Paul Bettany). It should have been possible to mold the nonsense of the novel into brightly colored hokum; instead, Howard, in collusion with his screenwriter, Akiva Goldsman, has chosen to serve up two and a half hours of verbose and joyless gloom. If you can't face watching this movie, you could always pray for it.—*A.L.* (5/29/06.) (In wide release.)

LA DÉSENCHANTÉE

In Benoît Jacquot's arch melodrama, from 1990, Marianne, the bare-breasted warrior maiden of the French Revolution, finds her modern model in a seventeen-year-old Parisian high-school girl who careens romantically through her hard-knock life. Beth (Judith Godrèche) lives with her bedridden and often catatonic mother and an eight-year-old brother; the family gets by on remittances from an elderly doctor who craves her body. The story begins with Beth in bed with a boyfriend whom she calls "the Other"; perversely, he drives her out of his bed and into a daytime disco to seek another Other. There follows a jerky rich kid in a pink Lacoste shirt, a knife-throwing middle-aged literary poseur, and a Chinese boy from school whose artistic skills she enlists to plot her revenge, all of whom are merely foils for Beth's brazen maneuvers of lust-and-parry. The shifting pairs play out their mind games in grand, gratuitous gestures that are as thoroughly French as Camembert. In French.—*Richard Brody* (Walter Reade Theatre; June 24-25 and June 27.)

DISTRICT B13

Another slickly made piece of action nonsense from Luc Besson, the producer and co-writer. In the near future, the lawless parts of Paris have been walled off into a no-hope zone where two men (Cyril Raffaelli, David Belle) must save a kidnapped girl and prevent a nuclear explosion. The film follows Besson's successful B-movie formula—a short running time, amazingly athletic actors, and a director (Pierre Morel) who has a flashy, quick-cut style. The movie, which features "parkour," the wall-scaling martial art, begins with a high: a sensational, wireless, Jackie Chan-worthy escape from a tenement building and over rooftops. In French.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)



DVD NOTES

WHY OUT WEST?

When John Ford directed "Stagecoach" (1939), he launched the modern Western and made John Wayne a star. If Ford's name is synonymous with the Western, two colossal new boxed sets, **"The John Ford Film Collection"** and **"The John Wayne–John Ford Film Collection"** (both from Warner Home Video), show why: because the Western was Hollywood's political genre par excellence, and Ford was America's greatest political filmmaker.

Ford took the newly settled West as a vast historical stage on which to dramatize the rise of democracy. In Westerns, he brought to life the abstract functions of government, from defense and diplomacy to trade and infrastructure, placing on his characters a constant civic responsibility.

In "Stagecoach," which is set in Arizona in the eighteen-eighties, Ford presents a West that is already becoming Easternized, with temperance leagues, meddling church ladies, and plutocratic bankers. The nine travellers who head for the aptly named outpost of Lordsburg are a microcosm of the westward expansion: a mistrustful bunch of outcasts and opportunists who must confront the menace of hostile Apaches and take their common fate into their own hands. First among them is the Ringo Kid (John Wayne), a renowned and unjustly convicted gunslinger who has escaped from jail and is out for revenge. Ringo's romance with a prostitute (Claire Trevor), which unfolds under the benevolent eye of a marshal who follows the spirit rather than the letter of the law, also makes "Stagecoach" a poignant, grandly archetypal love story.

As secular scripture, the Western was a natural backdrop for romantic heroism. Yet Ford, in his postwar Westerns, called attention to the double-edged role of legend, which provided a shared set of values but risked obscuring reality and clouding judgment. "Fort Apache," from 1948, tells two stories: one about a cruel, misguided, and ultimately suicidal attack ordered against Native Americans by a stiff-necked officer (Henry Fonda) and one about its misrepresentation in tabloid-journalistic lore as a glorious mission. Ford's final Western, the vast, complex "Cheyenne Autumn," from 1964, shows how sensationalistic stories in big-city newspapers caused Congress to pressure the Army into needless brutality against migrating Indians.

Ford's own place at the crossroads of legend and fact gave rise to one of his most emotional films, "The Wings of Eagles," from 1957, a bio-pic starring Wayne as the Navy flier Frank (Spig) Wead, a longtime friend of Ford's. A reckless air pioneer, Wead was grounded in 1926 by a devastating domestic accident and became a writer of naval stories. Later, he was summoned to Hollywood by a director (who is called John Dodge in the movie) to write scripts for films about the armed forces—including Ford's "They Were Expendable," from 1945.

—*Richard Brody*

ANDY FRIEDMAN

THE GREAT NEW WONDERFUL

This fractured drama about post-9/11 life, directed by Danny Leiner, who made the surprisingly satisfying "Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle," interweaves five stories. Emme (the adroit Maggie Gyllenhaal), a brittle high-end cake designer, vies for eminence with a rival (Edie Falco); a daft young couple (Judy Greer and Tom McCarthy) are tortured by the increasingly strange behavior of their overweight ten-year-old son; a retiree (Olympia Dukakis) who co-exists in silence with her uninspired husband gets a glimpse of happiness; a daffy psychiatrist (Tony Shalhoub in a funny but silly performance) interrogates a man (Jim Gaffigan) who has witnessed an office tragedy; two Indian immigrant security workers (Naseeruddin Shah and Sharat Saxena) annoy each other on the job. The stories are tentative at first, and they never really come together, but the most successful of them build to quiet moments of poignancy, particularly that of Emme, who has inflated the importance of winning one society client so much that there's nowhere to go but down.—*Shauna Lyon* (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)

IDENTITY

Absurdly compelling—but is there any better way to be compelling in a bloody suspense movie? James Mangold's compact, stylized horror film, from 2003, about ten strangers seeking shelter and confronting death in an old dark motel during a vicious, flooding storm, brings the antique and-then-there-were-none plot line into the era of serial-killer thrillers and extreme psychological sport. Even when the murders of the innocent (and the guilty) are predictable, Mangold brings them off with a surprising wallop or a pleasing dash of perversity. The skill he showed with the performers in his next film, "Walk the Line," can be seen in the way his eclectic cast here brings verve to souped-up stereotypes. The standouts include Amanda Peet, as an intelligent, self-respecting whore, Rebecca De Mornay, as a faded movie star who still has her pride, and Ray Liotta and John Cusack, who play bad cop and good ex-cop superbly. Michael Cooney wrote the script; you may see the big twists in the screenplay coming, but the little ones are what kill you.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; June 22.)

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

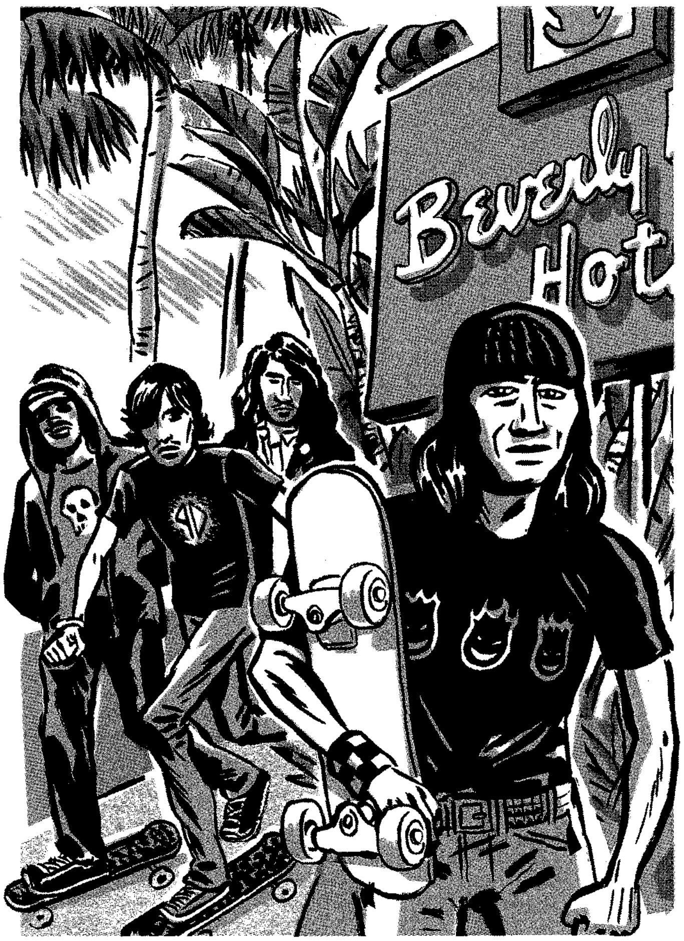
For long stretches of this epochal documentary about global warming, Al Gore talks before an audience with the aid of slides and charts. There are side trips to fissured ice caps, disappearing glaciers, and stretches of newly parched and broken terrain. The science is detailed, deep-layered, vivid, and terrifying. But there are also passages in which Gore, off-camera, speaks in an intimate voice that we've never heard from him before; he talks about lying by the side of a river on a lazy summer day—the commonplace idyll of a lone person in tranquil ecstasy, utterly at home in nature. "An Inconvenient Truth" begins that way, and the entire movie, with its procession of nightmares and dangers, plays off that idyll; each time Gore returns to it, the mood has greater resonance. If even half of what Gore says is true, this may be the most galvanizing documentary you will see in your lifetime. Directed by Davis Guggenheim.—*D.D.* (6/12/06) (In wide release.)

LOWER CITY

Sérgio Machado's movie uses an unfamiliar setting—steamed-up waterfronts on the northeastern coast of Brazil—to tell the old story of a romantic triangle. Alice Braga plays a prostitute who hitches a ride downriver to the city of Salvador; the owners of the boat, a pair of longtime friends (Lázaro Ramos and Wagner Moura), compete first for her sexual services and then, more destructively, for her love. The film threatens to founder in its later stages, which are trapped in the heroine's indecision; what keeps it going is the swarming business of the world that it depicts, with Machado's camera picking out the stabs of casual violence and, best of all, the rueful, lived-in faces of his secondary characters. Maybe documentary should be his next port of call. In Portuguese.—*A.L.* (6/19/06.) (Sunshine Cinema.)

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III

Tom Cruise returns as Ethan Hunt, the superfit secret operative who needs a team of fellow-agents to help him retrieve his missing sense of humor. They must also track down Agent Lindsey Farris (Keri Russell) in Berlin. She has been captured by Owen Davian (Philip Seymour Hoffman), who represents an even greater threat to world stability than Truman Capote. This third installment of the franchise, directed by J. J. Abrams, is the most streamlined to date, with a succession of gargantuan set pieces (the best of them in the Vatican) and dogged attempts to perforate the eardrums of the audience. Little of it makes sense, and the treachery of insiders—a source of worry to Hunt's superiors, played by Laurence Fishburne and Billy Crudup—has become the most wearisome feature of the genre. Toward the end, Abrams seems to run out of juice, and the role of Hunt's new wife (Michelle Monaghan) feels insultingly plaintive and thin. A tip for the next sequel: the closer these movies get to the old TV series, with its indefatigable teamwork, the more gripping they become. The mission was never meant to be a one-man show.—*A.L.* (5/15/06) (In wide release.)



Larry Clark's new teen drama, "Wassup Rockers," opens June 23.

NACHO LIBRE

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

THE OMEN

Despite its stiff artifice, the original 1976 version of this film became a classic by default. John Moore's remake follows it almost scene for scene but raises the visuals to current standards of flash and murk. Liev Schreiber is as apt a vessel of manly virtues as Gregory Peck, Julia Stiles matches Lee Remick as a blank slate of maternal sacrifice, and Seamus Davey-Fitzpatrick's Damien is a duly robotic cherub, but the action is now given even more of a religious slant: the film opens in the Vatican Observatory, where the telescope is put in service of a mortal prophecy that includes the Twin Towers, the new age of war, and Israel. The script has some truly macabre ideas, but they're realized almost entirely through the soundtrack, where bursts of gut-slamming, earsplitting noise compel a physical response even though there's little happening onscreen to warrant it. Long, slow, and suspenseless, this stillborn slog seems ready-made for instant reincarnation as "Scary Movie 5."—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

OVER THE HEDGE

The DreamWorks animation unit ups the creative ante with this comedy, about a group of hibernating forest creatures who awaken to find that civilization has settled into their own back yard. When the cute-as-a-button animals begin foraging for food in the garbage of the new housing development, the increasingly unhappy residents take exterminator action. Directed by Tim Johnson and Karey Kirkpatrick, the movie has a loony, slapstick verve, and the star-studded voice work is uniformly entertaining.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

POSEIDON

In his remake of the campy "Poseidon Adventure," the director Wolfgang Petersen, back in the water again, gets down to business quickly: a giant cruise liner gets hit by a rogue wave and turns turtle. The ship's poker-table hustler (Josh Lucas), who mysteriously possesses the precise skills required to lead people through upside-down ocean liners, takes command of a few would-be survivors. What follows is an exciting exercise in fear and hydraulics. No doubt about it: Petersen has a dynamic feel for the rush and heave of water, the pent-up energy, the sheer heft and uncontrollable momentum of the stuff. Mashed, whomped in the face with exploding hatches, bloodied, burned, forcibly gargled again and again, the actors give a good impression of going through hell, and they look genuinely worse for the wear.—*D.D.* (5/22/06) (In wide release.)

A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION

Robert Altman's re-creation of Garrison Keillor's incomparable weekly NPR show has many lovely moments and an overall fluency, but it's mellow to the point of inertia—so determined not to work up a sweat that it doesn't work up any heat, either. What we see is not quite the show—that is, it's billed not as the actual "Home Companion" but as a local Midwestern show of no great fame. Some wealthy religious Texans have bought both the local station and the show's home—the Fitzgerald Theatre, in St. Paul, Minnesota—and are closing them down. The movie is devoted to a backstage view of the last broadcast (which, confusingly, is not a haphazard amateur production but something like a typically brilliant "Home Companion" with some movie stars added). Large but soft-shoed, bearish but courtly, Keillor pads around, controlling a flow of comedy and music performed by a cast that includes Meryl Streep, who looks great and sings well, and Woody Harrelson and John C. Reilly, as Dusty and Lefty, singing cowboys with mean, dirty lyrics. Emotionally, the movie is a queasy experience: "Prairie" is widely loved, so it's hard to understand why Keillor promotes this self-pitying story of extinction by religious philistines. With Linda Williams and other "Prairie" regulars.—*D.D.* (6/12/06) (In wide release.)

RED DESERT

Michelangelo Antonioni's first film in color, from 1964, is his most mysterious and awe-inspiring

ERIK T. JOHNSON

work. The accoutrements of modernity—heavy industry, atomic energy, antiseptic architecture, petroleum waste, and a little boy's scientific precocity—converge to shatter the psyche of an engineer's wife in the Italian port of Ravenna. Giuliana (Monica Vitti) hasn't regained her composure after a monthlong hospital stay following a car accident, but the essence of her problem is metaphysical, and only her husband's boss (Richard Harris) seems to understand. Antonioni, in his most intense and virtuosic embodiment of the horrors and monstrosities that pass for ordinary life and normal people, depicts Giuliana's breakdown as a crisis of conscience and identity. Vitti's mask-like look of blank dread is the vanishing point for the polluted landscape of roaring machines; the yellow poison gas and orange flames that spout from smokestacks, the metallic river, the riotous tangle of tubes and pipes, and the smoldering fields of debris are the film's true main characters, pulling the strings of the human puppets who depend on them. In Italian.—*R.B.* (BAM; June 25.)

X-MEN: THE LAST STAND
Brett Ratner, taking over as director of the airborne "X-Men" franchise from Bryan Singer, ignores the liquid beauty and poetic fantasy of Singer's work and trashes his actors by repeatedly slamming them around or leaving them stranded. It's a gruelling, repetitive piece of work, much of it execrably staged. Where is it written that computer-generated imagery has to be used to extend the violence of comic-book plots? Bring on the aesthetes. With Ian McKellen, used more centrally than before, and in good voice; Patrick Stewart; Hugh Jackman; Famke Janssen; and the body, Rebecca Romijn, who is regrettably killed off before we can get more than a look at her.—*D.D.* (6/5/06) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

ARMY OF SHADOWS: Cinemas 1, 2, and 3 and Quad Cinema. **THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT:** In wide release. **THE LAKE HOUSE:** In wide release. **WORDPLAY:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Through July 1: New York Asian Film Festival. Selected screenings. Other screenings at ImaginAsian Theatre, 239 E. 59th St. For more information, go to www.subwaycinema.com. June 21 at 6: "Company" (2002, Ram Gopal Varma; in Hindi). ♦ June 22 at 6:30: "The Magicians" (2005, Song Il-gon; in Korean). ♦ June 24 at 3:30: "A Stranger of Mine" (2005, Kenji Uchida; in Japanese). ♦ June 25 at 3:30: "Pacchigi!" (2004, Kazuyuki Izutsu; in Japanese). ♦ Special screenings. June 22 at 8: "The Iron Giant" (1999, Brad Bird). ♦ June 23 at 7:30: "80 Steps to Jonah" (1969, Gerd Oswald). ♦ June 24-25 at 8: "The Grandfather Trilogy" (1979-81, Allen Ross). ♦ "Essential Cinema." June 24 at 5:30: Short films, including "Ménilmontant" (1924-25, Dimitri Kirsanoff; silent). ♦ June 25 at 6: "Rapt" (1934, Kirsanoff; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—Special screening. June 21 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Bombón, el Perro" (2004, Carlos Sorín; in Spanish). ♦ Through June 29: The films of Michelangelo Antonioni. Except where noted, all films are in Italian. June 22 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Lady Without Camelias" (1953). ♦ June 23 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Zabriskie Point" (1970; in English). ♦ June 24 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Eclipse" (1962). ♦ June 25 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Red Desert" (†). ♦ June 26 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Mystery of Oberwald" (1980). ♦ June 27 at 6 and 9: "Identification of a Woman" (1982).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. between 40th and 42nd Sts. (212-768-4242)—Through Aug. 21: HBO Bryant Park Film Festival. June 26 (lawn opens at 5; screening begins at dusk): "To Have and Have Not" (1944, Howard Hawks).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. June 21-27 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "Pandora's Box" (1929, G. W. Pabst; silent).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—The films of Michel Brault. June 27 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "The Long Winter" (1998; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—The films of Akira Kurosawa. June 23-25 at noon: "Kagemusha" (1980; in Japanese). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." June 23-24: "Tarnation" (2003, Jonathan Caouette), introduced by the director.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"To Save and Project." June 21 at 7:30: "Harvest: 3,000 Years" (1976, Haile Gerima; in Amharic). ♦ Films from CalArts. June 21 at 8:30: Short films about history (1997-2004). ♦ June 22 at 7 and June 24 at 7: Videos by Tony Oursler. ♦ June 23 at 8: "Forevermore: Biography of a Leach Lord" (1989, Eric Saks) and "Diesel Mama" (1973, James Hart and Peter Beckman). ♦ June 24 at 2: Short Pixar films (1985-2000). ♦ June 24 at 4 and June 25 at 3: "Massillon" (1991, William Jones) and short films. ♦ June 25 at 1: Short films, including "Leche" (1999, Naomi Uman). ♦ June 25 at 5: "What Are We Waiting For?" (2005, Hyun Kyung Kim; in Korean) and "Toilet Pig" (2002, Kim). ♦ Through June 29: The films of James Mangold. June 22 at 6: "Identity" (†). ♦ June 22 at 8: "Heavy" (1995). ♦ June 23 at 6: "Cop Land" (1997). ♦ "Dada on Film." June 24 at 3 and June 25 at 1: Short silent films, including "Entr'acte" (1924, René Clair; silent). ♦ Through June 30: The films of Vittorio De Seta. All films are in Italian. June 24 at 5: Ten documentary short films (1954-59), introduced by the director. ♦ June 25 at 3: "Bandits of Orgosolo" (1961). ♦ June 25 at 5: "Half a Man" (1966), introduced by the director. ♦ June 26 at 6: "Diary of a Schoolteacher" (1973), introduced by the director. ♦ June 26 at 8:30: "In Calabria" (1993).

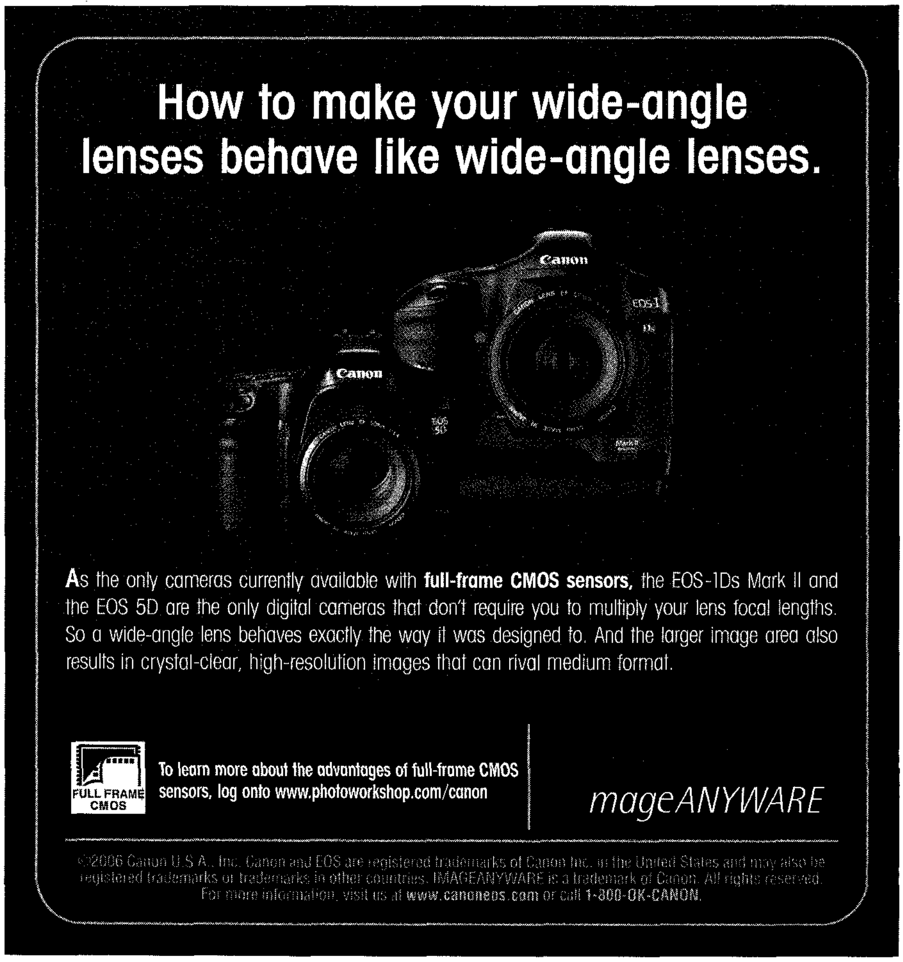
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Special screenings. June 23 at 7:30 and June 24-25 at 7: "The Forsaken Land" (2005, Vimukthi Jayasundara; in Sinhala). ♦ Through July 9: The films of Stanley Kubrick. June 24-25 at 2: "Lolita" (1962). ♦ June 24-25 at 5: "Dr. Strangelove" (1963).

PIONEER THEATRE
155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434)—Special screenings. June 21 at 9, June 23-24 at 7, and June 25 at 5: "Going Under" (2004, Eric Werthman). ♦ June 22-26 at 9: "The Garden of Earthly Delights" (2004, Lech Majewski). ♦ June 23 at 11: "Showgirls" (1995, Paul Verhoeven). ♦ June 24 at 11: "Carrie" (1976, Brian De Palma). ♦ June 25 at 7: "Mon Oncle" (1958, Jacques Tati; in French). ♦ June 26 at 7: "Nowhere Man" (2003, Tim McCann). ♦ June 27 at 7: "Vendetta Song" (2005, Eylem Kaftan; in Turkish) and short films.

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." June 23-24: "Reservoir Dogs" (1992, Quentin Tarantino).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—In revival. June 25 at 3 and June 27 at 6: "Mozart, a Childhood Chronicle" (1974, Klaus Kirschner; in German).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. June 21 at 1: "Smiling in a War Zone" (2005, Simone Aaberg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Kærn and Magnus Bejmar). ♦ June 21 at 3:30: “Winter in Baghdad” (2005, Javier Corcuera; in Arabic). ♦ June 21 at 6:30: “Pierrepoint” (2005, Adrian Shergold). ♦ June 21 at 8:45: “The Road to Guantánamo” (2006, Michael Winterbottom). ♦ June 22 at 1: “Rosita” (2005, Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater) and “Punam” (Lucian Muntean and Nataša Stankovic). ♦ June 22 at 3:30: “Men on the Edge: Fisherman’s Diary” (2005, Avner Faingulernt and Macabit Abramzon; in Arabic and Hebrew). ♦ June 22 at 6:15 and 9:15: “The Refugee All Stars” (2005, Zach Niles and Banker White). ♦ Through July 11: The films of Benoît Jacquot. All films are in French. June 23 at 2:30 and 6:30, June 25 at 6:30, and June 26 at 4:15: “Seventh Heaven” (1997). ♦ June 23 at 4:30 and 8:30, June 25 at 8:30, and June 26 at 2:15: “A Single Girl” (1995). ♦ June 24 at 4 and 7:45 and June 27 at 2: “A Tout de Suite” (2004). ♦ June 24 at 6 and 9:40, June 25 at 2:45, and June 27 at 4: “La Désenchantée” (†). ♦ June 25 at 4:30: “The False Servant” (1999).

READINGS AND TALKS

"POETIC CITY"

Poets House, a SoHo institution, celebrates its twentieth anniversary with an alfresco reading near its future home, in Battery Park City. Regie Cabico, Marie Howe, Grace Paley, and many others will be on hand, along with the R. & B. a-cappella singing group the Persuasions. (Rockefeller Park, Battery Park City. June 21 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

"KITCHEN SECRETS"

Bill Buford, a writer for this magazine, joins the chefs Mario Batali and Anthony Bourdain, the latter an accomplished author himself, for a talk about the restaurant trade. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-868-4444. June 21 at 7.)

"SLATE AT 10"

The online magazine celebrates its tenth anniversary with the writers and editors Malcolm Gladwell (who is on staff here), Arianna Huffington, Michael Kinsley, Norm Pearlstine, and Jacob Weisberg, who will discuss online journalism and its impact on traditional media. (Celeste Bartos Forum. June 22 at 6:30.)

GARY SHTEYNGART

The novelist reads from his latest book, “Absurdistan.” (Central Library, Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn. 718-230-2100. June 24 at 2.)

FRANK MCCOURT

The author of the memoirs “Angela’s Ashes” and “ ’Tis” reads from “Teacher Man,” the final book in the trilogy about his life, to benefit Hamilton Heights Academy, a public elementary school situated at P.S. 28, in West Harlem. (American Academy of Arts and Letters, 632 W. 156th St. For more information, call 212-368-4424. June 26 at 7.)

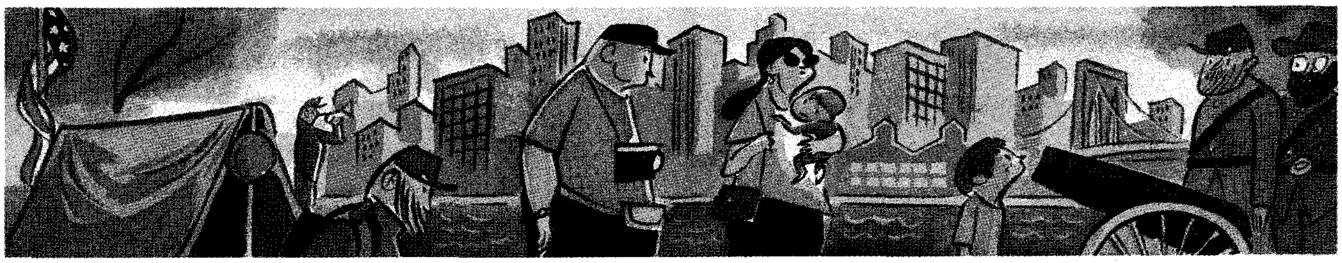
ABOVE AND BEYOND

MERMAID PARADE

Coney Island’s annual celebration of sand, sun, and insanity—in which the homemade costumes always outshine the B-list-celebrity king and queen—begins June 24 at 2. The parade is followed by a ball at 5, with local bands. (For more information, visit www.coneyisland.com.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie’s sale of cards and games on June 21 doles out a colorful set of hand-painted early-nineteenth-century French playing cards depicting the street venders of Paris—like the droll Mme. de Chiffons (Madame of the Rags)—as well as tarot cards and “game compendiums,” which contain everything one needs for a long, rainy weekend amongst friends. Marilyn’s little black dress from “The Misfits” goes up for sale on June 22, part of an auction of film and entertainment memorabilia that features a selection of Warholiana, including a silver wig, paint-spattered Ferragamos, and Polaroid shots of various celebrities. June 23 is given over to luxurious carpets; then things take a more serious turn with a sale entitled “The History of the Book” (June 27-28), a meticulously assembled private collection of books, manuscripts, papyri, and cuneiform tablets (there’s even a book written on jade) featuring a fantastically illustrated “book of friendship,” a kind of scrapbook put together by a successful silk merchant in the early seventeenth century to document his powerful connections. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ Sports fans get their day at **Sotheby’s** with a sale of sports memorabilia (June 24), headlined by the road jersey of the Washington Senators pitching legend Walter Johnson, known as the Big Train, famous for his batter-confounding fastball. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ **Kestenbaum & Company** holds a sale of Judaica on June 20, featuring books and letters from several private collections, including a 1726 Pentateuch printed in Holland, which once belonged to Reverend Moses Mendes Seixas, of Newport. (12 W. 27th St. 212-366-1197.)



MARCELLUS HALL

A Civil War encampment on Governors Island, in August.

ON THE HORIZON

CLASSICAL MUSIC
RETURN OF THE KING

July 7

James Levine, recovering from the shoulder injury that sidelined him in March, conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony at Tanglewood. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

MOVIES
FULL GAYNOR

July 1-12

One of the great gamine stars of the silent and early sound eras, Janet Gaynor retired in 1939 at the time of her second marriage. For her centennial, MOMA is offering a festive batch of films, including the original “A Star Is Born,” from 1937, and F. W. Murnau’s “Sunrise,” which the titanic and short-lived German director made in Hollywood in 1927, and which many (including *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics, in 1958) have called the greatest film ever made. (212-708-9480.)

ART
EYE ON REMBRANDT

July 11-Oct. 15

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn was born exactly four hundred years ago this summer (his birthday was July 15), and the Met will mark his quadricentennial with an exhibition of drawings and prints, most of them from the permanent collection. (212-535-7710.)

NIGHT LIFE
OUT OF AFRICA

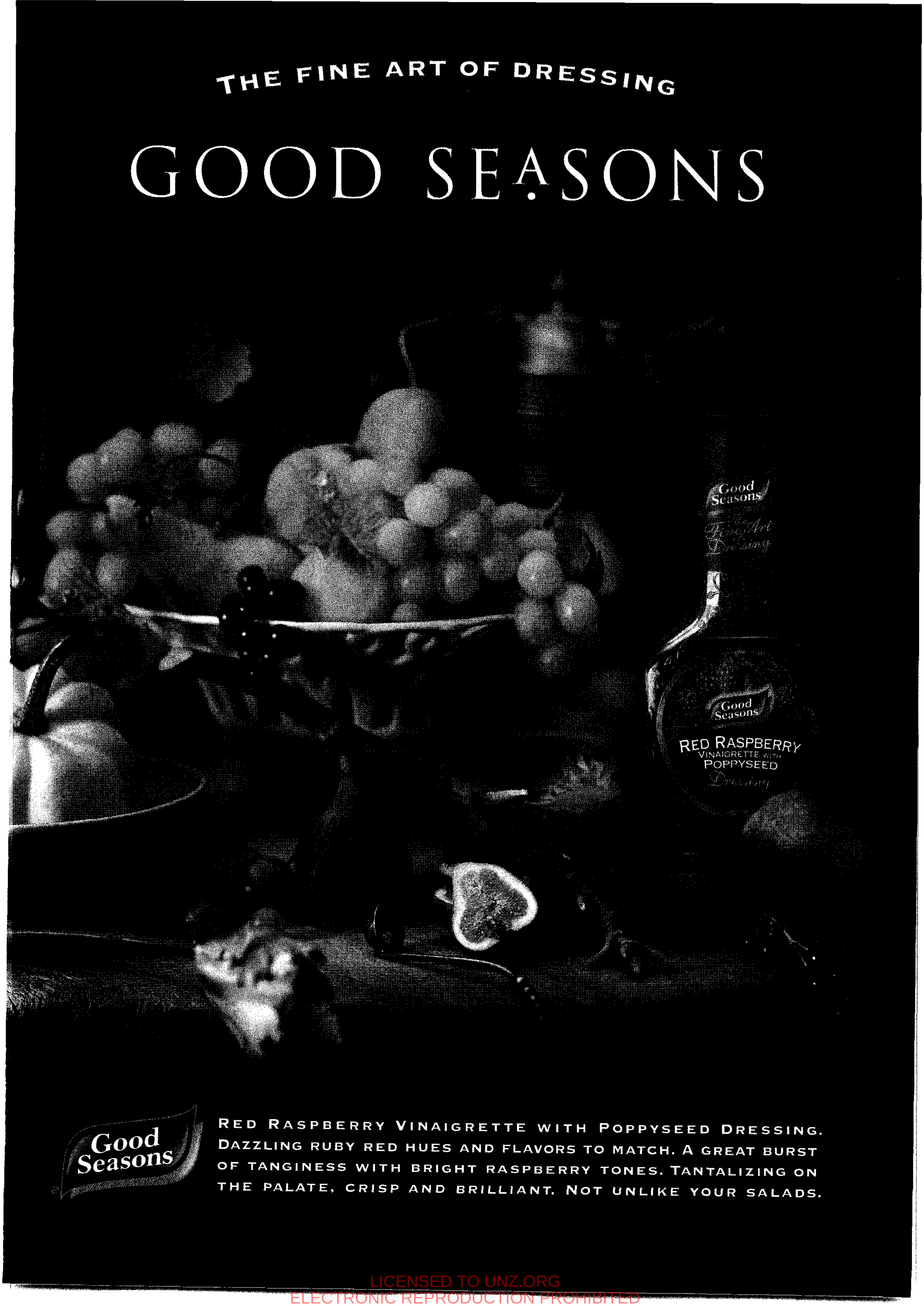
Aug. 5

The Celebrate Brooklyn! concert series turns the spotlight on Africa during a daylong festival of music from that continent. The headliners include Kékélé, an all-star ensemble from Congo that has a style based in the joyful rumbas of the fifties and sixties, and Lágbájá, a mysterious Nigerian singer and saxophonist who always wraps his face in a mask. (718-855-7882, ext. 45.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
ISLAND SOLDIERS

Aug. 12

The history of the Civil War comes to life as uniformed volunteers set up camp on Governors Island. Part of their focus will be on the draft riots of July, 1863, which were quelled only after Union regiments from the Gettysburg battlefield reached the city. (212-440-2202.)


Good Seasons
The Fine Art of Dressing
Good Seasons
RED RASPBERRY
VINAIGRETTE WITH
POPPYSEED
Dressing
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THE FINE ART OF DRESSING

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THE NEW YORKER

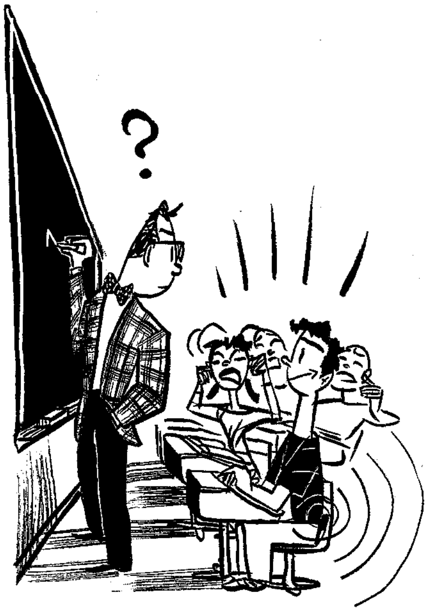
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
NAME THAT TONE

There is a new cell-phone ring tone that can't be heard by most people over the age of twenty, according to an NPR report. The tone is derived from something called the Mosquito, a device invented by a Welsh security firm for the noble purpose of driving hooligans, yobs, scamps, ne'er-do-wells, scapegraces, ruffians, tosspots, and bravos away from places where grownups are attempting to ply an honest trade. The device emits a seventeen-kilohertz buzz, a pitch that is too high for older ears to register but, as we learn from additional reporting by the *Times*, is "ear-splitting" for younger people. A person or persons unknown have produced a copy of the Mosquito buzz for use as a cell-phone ring tone, evidently with the idea that it will enable students to receive notification of new text messages while sitting in class, without the knowledge of the teacher.

The *Times*, in a welcome but highly uncharacteristic embrace of anarchy, celebrated this development as an ingenious guerrilla tactic in youth's eternal war against adult authority—"a bit of techno-jujitsu," as the paper put it. But it's not entirely clear which side is the winner here. When you hear the tone, it apparently sets your teeth on edge, which means that, if the entire class suddenly grimaces, it's a good bet that one of the students just got a text message. (Which probably says "sup." Youth, as George Bernard Shaw correctly observed, is wasted on the young.) Anyway, what was wrong with "vibrate only"?

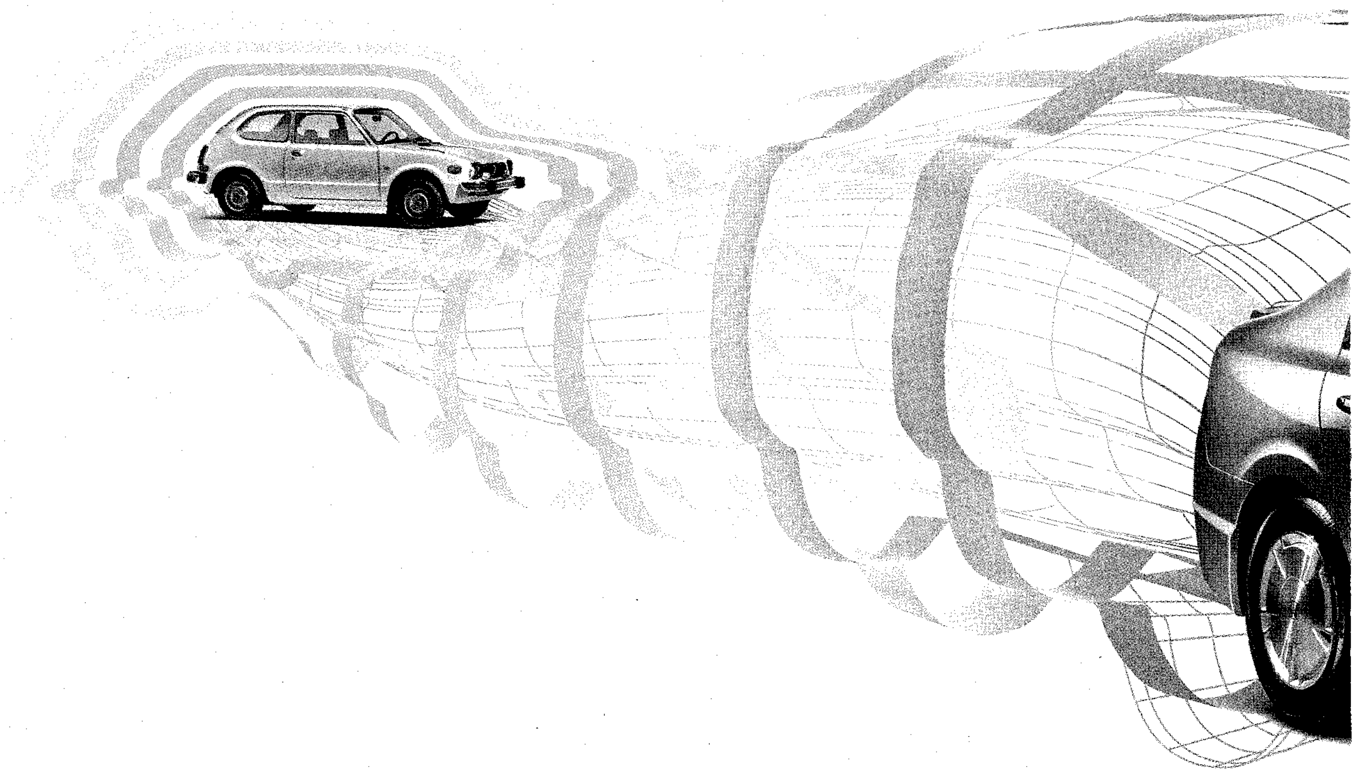
The real interest of the story, of course, lies elsewhere. The news is not that students are fooling their teachers, which was never news, even in ancient Greece, or that technology is rapidly unravelling the fabric of trust and respect on which civil society depends, which everyone already knows. It is that one more way for middle-aged people to feel that they're losing it has been discovered. The public concern over natural hearing loss—the *Times* explains that the medical term is "presbycusis"—is part of a trend that started when Bob Dole told the nation that he had trouble getting an erection. Now television commercials inform us that thirty million American men may have trouble getting an erection. Wow. And these are big, friendly, touch-football-playing guys, with George Clooney smiles and luscious, adoring, patient wives. Decay is everywhere discussed, though it is always, weirdly, disguised. Young women with luminous skin explain the importance of fighting premature wrinkling. Thirty is the new forty. We know that this is just anxiety manufactured to sell products, but it does have an impact. People worry about being old before they get old. Americans are living longer but, somehow, aging sooner.



People tend to regard the gradual yet irreversible atrophying of their faculties as a bad thing. Is it, though? Sure, it's tied up with stuff that you don't want to think too much about. One day, you learn that you can't hear a sound that is perfectly audible to teen-agers and dogs. (Any significance in that symmetry, by the way? Do we feel diminished as a species because dogs can hear a noise that we can't?) Soon after that, you realize that you have forgotten how to calculate the area of a triangle, and how many pints there are in a quart. From there, it's not long until you find that you are unable to stop talking about real estate, which is the first step down an increasingly rocky and overgrown path

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Honda thinking in action.



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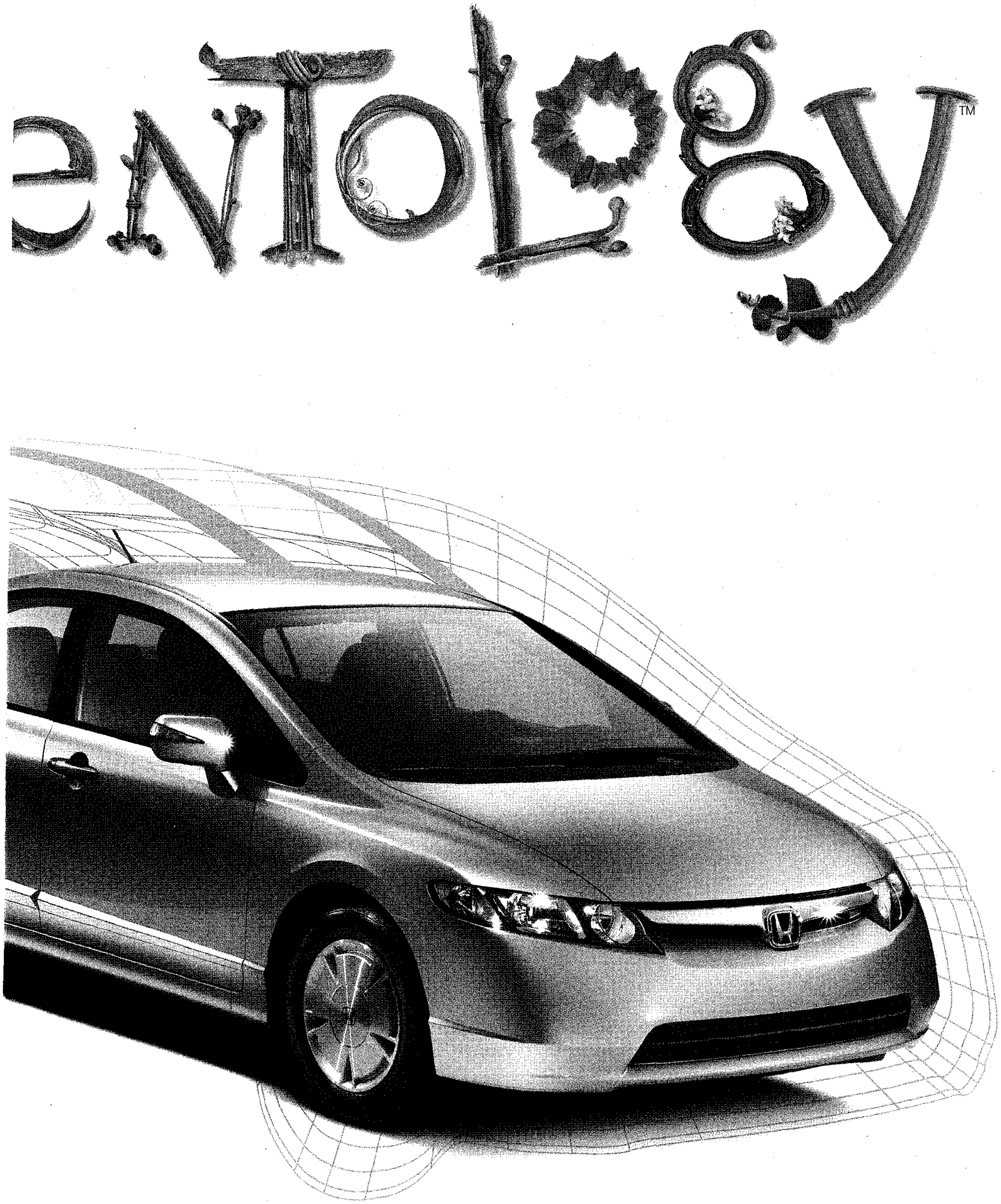

entology™

that leads, almost always—all right, always—to death. What is there to like about any of this?

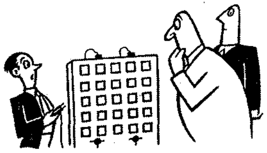
Well, first of all, who *wants* to hear someone else's cell phone? The Mosquito tone is like the squirrel's heartbeat that George Eliot refers to in "Middlemarch": "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity." The Mosquito tone is one of those things you're better off not knowing. The world is probably full of such things (though how would you know?). Maybe the area of a triangle isn't that important, either. Maybe, in the end, it *is* all about real estate.

The point is that mental and physical development never stops, no matter how old you are, and development is one of the things that make it interesting to be a being. We imagine that we change our opinions or our personalities or our taste in music as we ripen, often feeling that we are betraying our younger selves. Really, though, our bodies just change, and that is what changes our views, our temperament, and our tolerance for Billy Joel. We can't help it. The chemistry has altered.

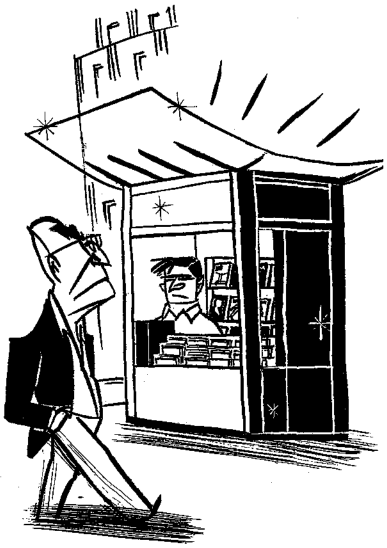
This means that some things that were once present to us become invisible, go off the screen; the compensation is that new things swim into view. Ramps are an example. Try getting a teen-ager to appreciate a grilled ramp. Try getting a teen-ager to appreciate another person, for that matter. We may lose hormones, but we gain empathy. The deficits, in other words, are not all at one end of the continuum. Readers who are over twenty may not hear the new ring tone; if they had it on their phones, it might as well be silent. But most readers who are under the age of twenty will not be able to "hear" this Comment. Yes, they will see the words, and they will imagine that they are reading something, and that it makes sense; but they can never truly "get it." The Comment is simply beyond the range of their faculties. For all intents and purposes, if you're under twenty, this page might as well be blank.

—*Louis Menand*

STREETSCAPE
BILLBOARD CITY



In another era, a reference to New York's "street furniture" might have conjured images of mildewed orange sofas, three-legged coffee tables, and mangled desk lamps. But this is Michael Bloomberg's New York, where trash pickup never falters, and where no sponsorship or marketing opportunity is left unexplored. In a matter of weeks, the city will unveil its proprietary new designs for what Department of Transportation officials are calling a "unified streetscape" composed of sleek, and advertising-friendly, outdoor "furniture" that will replace existing civic structures, like bus-stop shelters and newsstands, and create new ones, like freestanding public toilets.



New newsstand

"Aesthetically, it's really going to look quite lovely," Iris Weinshall, the Transportation Commissioner, said the other day, at D.O.T. headquarters, where a group had convened to review the latest plans. All of the structures have a Jetsons-meet-Bauhaus feel—matte silvery metal, cantilevered roofs, and frosted-glass panels. ("The furniture is assembled from a 'kit of parts,' " a press release reads. "This component-based approach also gives the furniture a family identity and creates a common language across the transit system.")

More important, the project will generate revenue: Cemusa, the Spanish company that is installing and maintaining the structures, will pay the city a billion dollars for the right to sell advertising space on them for the next twenty years. The deal includes more than three thousand new bus shelters, three hundred and thirty newsstands, and twenty toilet enclosures, with the possibility of branching out into other poster-ready street fixtures, such as garbage cans. (Phone-booth contracts aren't up for another eight years, and, Weinshall said, "it would be difficult to put advertising on bike racks.")

Unlike the existing bus shelters, which are "effectively like tables that have been plunked down, where you can see all the bolts," the new designs, according to their creator, Duncan Jackson, are based on a "portal frame structure, with minimal ground fixings," for easier sidewalk sweeping. The city's Art Commission has rejected "perches," or waist-level bars, such as you might see in London, in favor of full benches. "New York doesn't like to perch," Toulla Constantinou, the C.E.O. of Cemusa, said. An illuminated information panel on one end of each shelter will allow for the eventual possibility, she added, of "showing, in real time, that the next bus is going to be here in—" She paused. "Five years."

"That would be the M16?" a D.O.T. official asked.

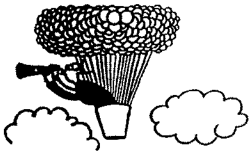
But what of the newsstands? Like a man's beloved—and ripped, and stained—football-watching chair, the corner newsstand as we know it, stuffed to the point of bursting, and jerry-rigged with duct tape, milk crates, Igloo coolers, bungee cords, and dangling light bulbs, has never failed to provide homey comfort, whether on Sunday afternoon (you got your *Post* and your Doritos) or Monday morning (your *Journal*, Diet Coke, and some eyedrops). By comparison, the new, standardized fleet, built of modular stainless steel and aluminum—"so you won't see the institutional browns and dark greens that you tend to see now," Jackson said—are straight from Ikea.

On the southeast corner of Wall Street and William Street, one recent morning, a vender named Lucky was not looking forward to the switch. (Newsstand operators have until now been responsible for building their own huts, and they pay the city an annual licensing fee of around five hundred dollars; under the new program, the city will pay for construction costs associated with demolition and replacement.) Lucky inherited the stand, which is eighty-four years old, and made of green-painted wood, from an uncle. He replaces the aluminum roof every two years, adds a fresh coat of paint annually, and repairs the interior as needed, using "hammer, nails, whatever I can find." Every once in a while, he calls a carpenter.

"I don't want it," he said of the new streamlined design. "There's not enough room for candy, and"—he reached his hand out the front and up over his head, pointing at a copy of *FHM*, with a cover image dominated by barely concealed breasts, fastened to the overhang—"they don't let you do this."

—*Ben McGrath*

BECAUSE IT'S THERE
SHERPA SLEEPOVER



"The weird thing," one of the guides was saying, "is that this feels and sounds exactly like base camp at Everest." She gestured around at the surprisingly noisy scene: the guides stowing their gear in the newly assembled mountain tents, the Himalayan wind whistling painfully through the air, the climbers chowing down on a kind of Nepalese protein gloop ("Looks like yak dung but tastes O.K.," one said), while the Sherpas, off in a corner, quietly tested equipment and pulled at harnesses. The Sherpas, four in all, included Kaji Sherpa, who once climbed Everest in a then-record twenty hours and twenty-four minutes. (The usual Sandy Pittman-style guided ascent takes about five days.)

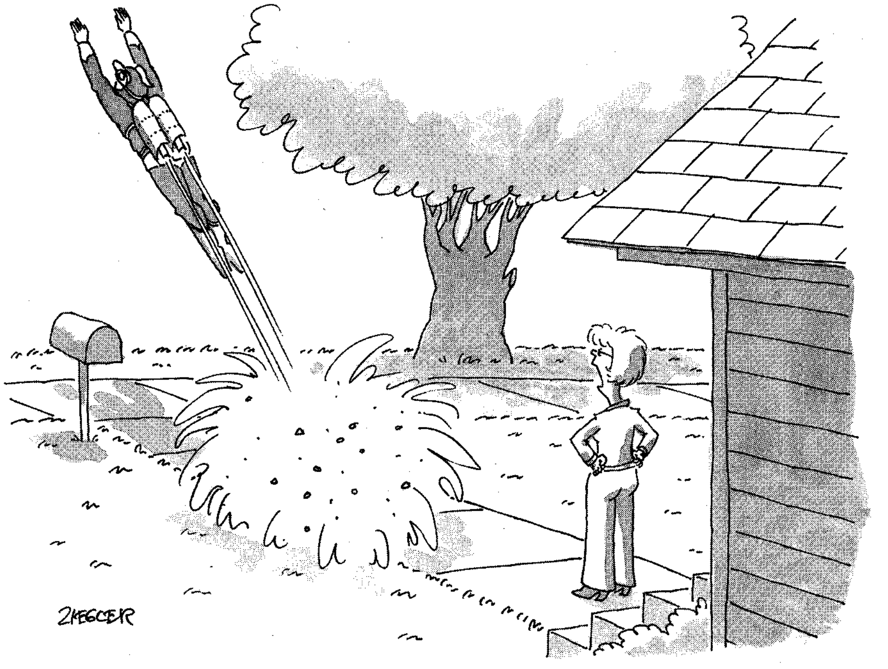
This ascent, however, was supposed to last only around twelve hours, with four hours off for not-actually-sleeping in the tents, and, probably for the first time in the history of mountaineering, all the climbers were smaller than the Sherpas, because the Everest to be scaled was a simulacrum Everest represented by the five-story circular staircase in the rotunda of the Rubin Museum, on West Seventeenth Street. The museum, which is devoted to Himalayan art, was once the original Barney's—the wind was being piped in through the P.A. system—and the climbers were about forty New York middle schoolers. The would-be summiteers were the kind of mixed lot you find on every Everest expedition these days: Daltonites, with that skeptical, seen-it-all Dalton expression; some grimly self-disciplined St. Bernarders, who wore T-shirts with their school name on it; an Ethical Culturer or two; and various P.S.ers. The scene, for the few non-Sherpa adults present, was doubly surreal: in its convincing imitation of a mountain to climb, and in the memory that the mountain-museum had once been the stairs that led you down to the old Le Cafe, up to Chelsea Passage, and through that dangerous pass where they kept spritzing you with Eternity.

A few minutes before, Luis Benitez, the legendary American mountaineer, had gathered the expedition around him and explained its purpose, which was not merely to summit the staircase but also to learn something about teamwork while doing it. Benitez, a handsome, curly-haired, and compactly charismatic man, explained that Everest, these days, is as much a moral testing ground as it is a mountain. "You learn about yourself, and about your self in relation to others. You learn about endurance. You learn about trust," he said. He took some questions from the kids. ("I've got a friend who, like, says that there's a slide that runs from top to bottom?") Then the guides helped them put on their climbing harnesses, and they were off up the icefall.

"A lot of what you're going to do on the mountain is wait," Benitez had explained, and it was true. A long line formed at the icefall (represented by a small hill of white-wrapped packages filling the first staircase, poised to avalanche if any unwary climber tried to race past them). A couple of the climbers froze for a moment crossing the crevasse, but the Sherpas remained unperturbed. "That always happens," one said.

At each camp on the mountain (i.e., each floor of the museum), the climbers, who had been organized into four teams, had to search for clues pointing to the solution of a puzzle, finally achieved when they reached the third camp, and discovered an Old Wise Woman (played by a twenty-three-year-old museum docent), who presented them with various ethical dilemmas.

The expedition had been haunted from the first by the tale of the Englishman who was left to die near the peak this season after dozens of other climbers walked right by him. ("It happened on the China side," one guide said with disgust; the China side is the Wal-Mart side of the mountain, while the ascent of the Nepalese face usually costs about sev-



"This had better not be another one of your slutty damsels in distress!"

enty thousand dollars.) The Old Wise Woman asked the mountaineers if they would have saved the climber in distress, even if it meant that they couldn't summit themselves. The kids voted to save the guy. "You're very wise," the old woman said. Then she asked if the kids, to fortify themselves for the journey, would eat fruit, candy, or fish guts. The night's lessons, plus years of multiple choice, take-the-non-obvious-choice exam strategizing, produced a unanimous answer: eat the fish guts. "They're, like, probably very high in protein and stuff," someone said. An unexpected avalanche, represented by a sequence of very loud crashes on the P.A. system, sent everyone back to the tents for bedtime, interrupted only by the 12:30 A.M. appearance of a Yeti, but the next morning everyone summited, and got a certificate to prove it.

Some post-climb comments:

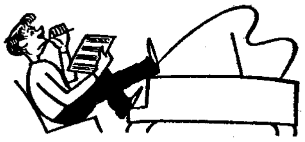
"The thing about leaving the guy on the mountain is that, like, obviously you wouldn't do it if the mountain is a museum. It's harder to know what you would do if the mountain was a mountain."

On wit and discretion: "Saying you'll eat fish guts is one of those things you do when you're in a group."

On the essence of mountaineering: "Mostly, you clip and unclip that clip thing."

—*Adam Gopnik*

DO IT AGAIN DEPT.
RUFUS AT CARNEGIE HALL



Not every single New Yorker was focussed on the Rufus Wainwright concert last Wednesday; a cabdriver from Côte d'Ivoire, who was taking one concertgoer to Carnegie Hall, was listening to a tape of a Mandinka-speaking Muslim preacher, which a friend back home in Abidjan had sent him. But certainly in a particular crowd, one that has a sizable membership in this city—Gay Men and the Women Who Love Them—people had been buzzing about this concert for two months. Rufus Wainwright was going to—can you believe this?—re-create the famous, and famously fabulous, concert that Judy Garland gave at Carnegie Hall on April 23, 1961. That's right: fabulous. Get the record. Then we'll talk. Wainwright's concert sold out immediately, so a second was added, the following night—that sold out immediately, too. E-mails went back and forth: Was this really a good idea? Was it proper, appropriate, really a homage, or was it an insult to the memory of the woman many consider to be the greatest entertainer of the twentieth century? Was it just a bad idea? Was it a funny idea—and, if so, was that a good thing? Maybe: after all, Garland herself had a wicked sense of humor. Whatever was going to happen, it counted as a mustn't-miss event. In anticipation of the concert, *Time Out New York* had been running short weekly pieces under the heading "Countdown to Judy," and now her fans, and Wainwright's fans, were ready to blast off.

Outside Carnegie Hall before the show, the atmosphere was surprisingly subdued. Perhaps fans were nervous, for Wainwright and for themselves—people who love Judy Garland don't want to have their feelings upset, and there was so much room for error in this enterprise. Older people wondered whether the thirty-two-year-old Wainwright would get it—there was a time not long ago when young gay men actively shunned Judyism as a suffocating remnant of pre-Stonewall closetedness. (In Greenwich Village in the eighties, Judy Garland albums were seen lined up on the curb, their owners dead of AIDS.) But Wainwright was very publicly gay, and his interest in replicating the show had much to do with the music—he has EGBDF in his DNA (his parents are Kate McGarrigle and Loudon Wainwright III), and at the age of eight he'd be woken up by his mother at three in the morning to sing "Over the Rainbow" as a way of signalling to guests that it was time to go. (Like Garland, Wainwright has had trouble with drugs. Luckily, he has cleaned up his act, and shows no sign that he will waste away before his time, as Garland did, thirty-seven years ago this week, at the age of forty-seven.)

Inside, venders were doing a tidy business: a representative of the U.S. Postal Service was selling sheets of the Garland stamp that was issued earlier in the month, on the occasion of her birthday, and a man sold pins made from the stamps, for three dollars. He said that he considered Garland to be one of three tragic figures of the twentieth century; another was James Dean, and he couldn't remember the third. Bummed by the fact that programs inexcusably ran out—come *on*, Carnegie Hall—people went to their seats braced for a measure of disappointment. But as soon as the orchestra struck up the opening notes of the overture, a medley of some of Garland's signature songs, the audience became both more relaxed and more excited.

Wainwright was understated compared with Garland—meaning that there were fewer sequins involved. He wore a white shirt that had sparkly navy-blue stars on it, and a suit whose color the J. Crew catalogue would call stone, with black tuxedo stripes on the legs. (Let's just not discuss the brown belt.) For the second act—following an intermission in which the ladies' rooms were hauntingly empty, with the wind howling across the lonely tiled plain—he switched to a shiny silk top hat and tux. Wainwright's nasal voice is supple and liquidy, and it carries tones of amusement, sadness, and I-am-what-I-am-ness. He mostly stayed away from Garland's well-known patter—"I know, I'll sing 'em all, and we'll stay all night!"—but did talk about his relationship with his muse. "I wanted to be Dorothy—on good days. On bad days, I wanted to be the Wicked Witch. I would put on an apron and my father would stand there with a Scotch in his hand and go, 'Oh, my God.' I would place my mother's shoes in this diabolical circle; I would take one of her finest gowns, from, I don't know, Laura Ashley"—the mention of the doyenne of un-fabulousness got an enormous laugh—"and I would step into the shoes, and I would melt." The concert didn't have the electricity of Garland's album (it did have an appearance by Lorna Luft, Garland's younger daughter), but if it wasn't quite a night of magic it was still a triumph, and a moving one, especially when McGarrigle came out onstage for the encore, to play piano accompaniment to her son's rendition of Cole Porter's "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye"—a song that Garland didn't sing, and yet an apt end to the evening. Mom had tears in her eyes when it was over, and so did almost everyone else.

—*Nancy Franklin*

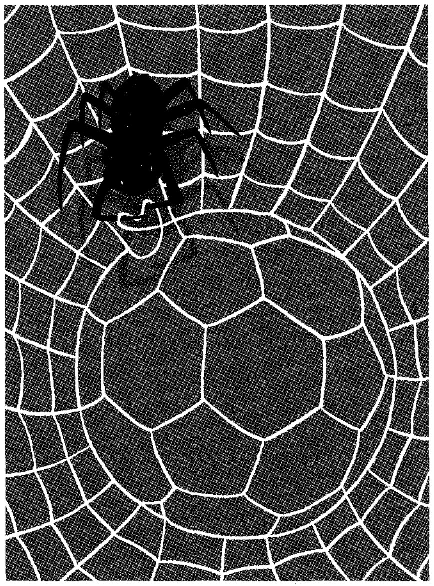
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
FIFA'S FIEFDOM

On the eve of this year's World Cup, Sepp Blatter, the president of FIFA, the worldwide governing body for soccer, gave a speech in which he laid out his organization's lofty goals. "Universality is still our guiding force," he said; FIFA must preserve soccer as a "beacon of hope." FIFA was established in 1904, and Blatter's rhetoric evoked that era's dream that sport would foster global amity. Like the International Olympic Committee, founded the decade before, FIFA was a prototype of the modern non-governmental organization, free from the influence of the state (since it's not a government agency) and of the market (since it's technically non-profit). FIFA gives every country in the world one vote, so that tiny countries like the Solomon Islands have as much pull as soccer giants like Germany and Italy. It rules impartially, concerned only with "the good of the game," as the organization likes to say.

Modern soccer, however, is apparently so riddled with Machiavellian maneuvering that Henry Kissinger once said it made him "nostalgic for the Middle East." Blatter himself is a canny autocrat who has maintained and expanded his power with Boss Tweed-style tactics, as alleged in "Foul!," a new book by the British investigative journalist Andrew Jennings. Blatter denies all allegations of wrongdoing, but after he came to power, in 1998, one FIFA member signed a statement swearing that he had been offered a bribe for his vote. In 2002, Blatter's own deputy submitted a well-documented report charging him with financial mismanagement and of running FIFA "to the benefit of third parties and his personal interests." When FIFA's audit committee started to look into the organization's finances, Blatter shut down the investigation. In the years since, he has consolidated his power, so that his will now seems to be law.

This is nothing new in the world of international sports. Blatter's predecessor at FIFA, João Havelange, was legendary for his autocratic ways. So, too, were Primo Nebiolo, who was the president of the International Association of Athletics Federations for almost two decades, and Juan Antonio Samaranch, whose tenure as head of the International Olympic Committee was marked by charges of bid-rigging, bribery, and influence-peddling. Such venal self-dealing seems to have been more the rule than the exception in international sports.

Why, when global governing bodies have such noble aims, are the results so consistently bad? One answer is suggested by a school of thought known as public-choice economics, propounded in the nineteen-fifties largely by conservative economists seeking to explain why government doesn't work as well as we expect it to. Public-choice economists emphasize the importance of self-interest in shaping behavior, showing that bureaucrats are often more interested in protecting and expanding their power than in looking after the common good. And they focus on the role of interest groups, suggesting that governing bodies typically make decisions based on well-organized lobbying and personal connections.



As a critique of government, this is oversimplified, but it's persuasive as a description of FIFA, where "the good of the game" seems to get subordinated to the good of FIFA. The major television contracts for the 2002 World Cup, for instance, went to two companies that Blatter had ties to, even though they were not the highest bidders—in fact, both of them later went bankrupt. One of Blatter's closest allies in the Caribbean has in the past received television rights to that region for the sum of one dollar. Even useful FIFA initiatives often end up being surprisingly helpful to Blatter's interests. Since Blatter took office, FIFA has channelled tens of millions of dollars in grants to developing countries to promote soccer, while seeming not to pay too much attention to how the money gets spent. Perhaps coincidentally, this tends to make representatives from these countries very grateful, and very unwilling to change the status quo.

Not everything Blatter has done has been terrible. In theory, more money for soccer in Africa is a good idea, and this year's World Cup is likely to be the most successful in history, bringing in at least $2.4 billion in revenue. But the spike in revenue under Blatter is largely the product of things he had nothing to do with, including the growing demand for sports television and advertisers' hunger for young viewers. The major European soccer leagues (which FIFA does not control) have seen their revenue rise by nearly six billion dollars in the past decade; by that yardstick, FIFA may actually be underperforming a booming market. Indeed, a few years ago, estimates of its debt ranged from tens to hundreds of millions of dollars.

The paradox is that the things that make FIFA seem like an ideal organization—its egalitarian voting structure and its insulation from outside forces—are the very things that have made it a graft-ridden autocracy. Because Blatter doesn't have to answer to either the state or the market, he can do whatever he needs to do to stay in power. FIFA's internal politics aren't going to keep soccer fans from coming to the World Cup, and no hostile takeover is going to depose Blatter. His organization's role is ultimately a feel-good one, and, as with an old-style caudillo, it seems people are prepared to accept occasional shenanigans if the man in charge has good populist instincts. In his recent speech, Blatter said, "FIFA may not be perfect, and it may not have perfect people working for it, but the basic idea is healthy and solid." The idea may be. The reality isn't.

—*James Surowiecki*

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LETTER FROM ZIMBABWE

BIG MAN

Is the Mugabe era near its end?

BY JOSHUA HAMMER

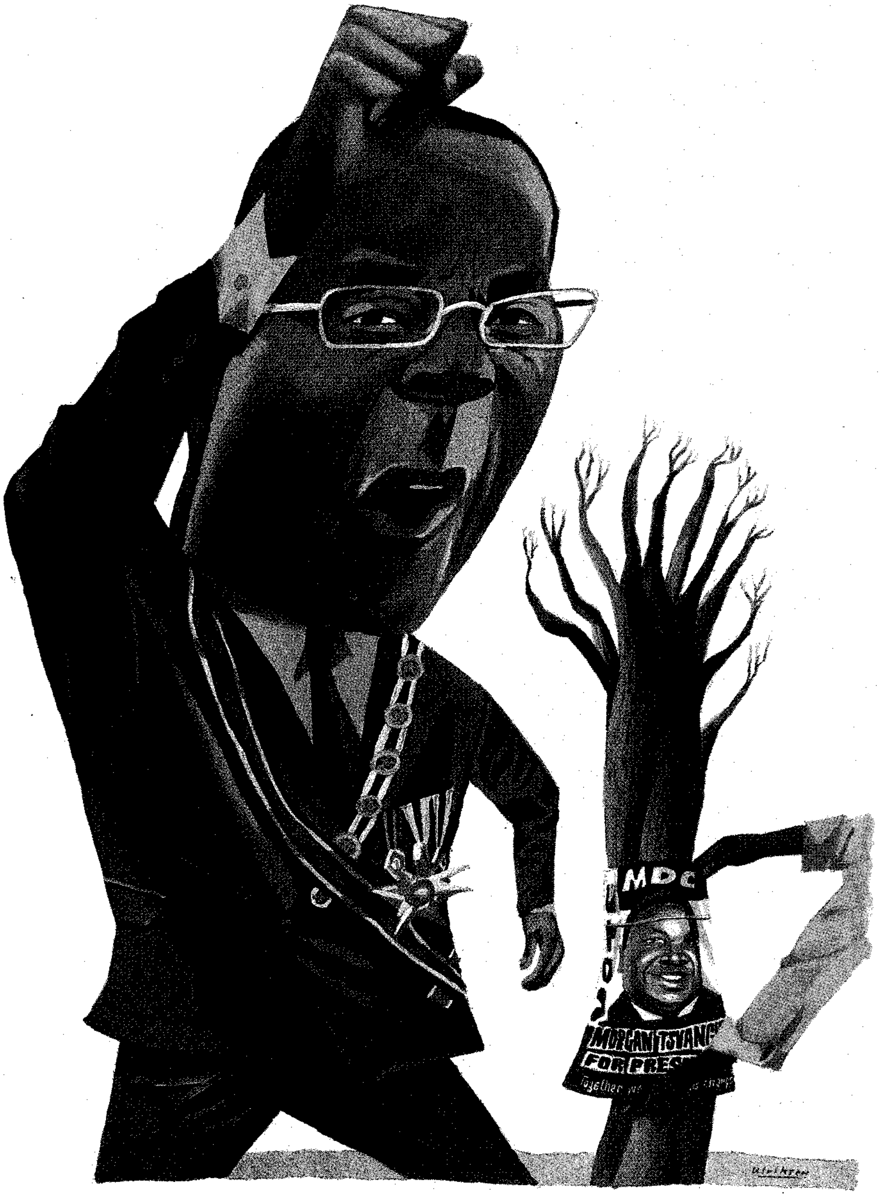
One recent morning, accompanied by an employee of a local residents'-rights group, I drove my Opel Astra rental car about six miles south from the center of Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, to a squatter camp that had sprung up last year: a cluster of shanties made of road signs, radiator grilles, and other scrap. A dozen people were standing or sitting in front of the hovels, cooking over small fires, beating laundry against rocks; a tall young woman, who introduced herself as Nancy Mugova, was kneeling in the dirt with a baby tied to her back, hammering rivets into the handle of a frying pan. She invited us to sit with her in her dwelling—four feet tall, twelve feet long, and made of corrugated tin, with a flat tin roof held down by rocks. There was just enough room in the airless interior for a double mattress (on which all five members of the family slept), a cheap cabinet filled with ceramic plates and cups, a box of clothes, three pairs of men's shoes, and two sacks of *sadsa*, or mealy meal, the Zimbabwean staple, which cooks into a thick porridge. Just in front of the structure, the Mugovas had propped up an iron grate over two stones; this served as their kitchen.

Mugova, who was wearing the white robe and white head scarf of a local evangelical church, told us what had happened. Early one morning in mid-June, 2005, hundreds of armed officers of the Zimbabwe Republican Police and the city police notified the Mugovas and their neighbors that their houses were "illegal," and gave them thirty minutes to remove what they could. Nancy Mugova, her husband, Israel, and their children stood in the cold and watched a bulldozer demolish the five-room brick cottage that had served as both their home and their workplace, a metalworking shop. By the end of the day, bulldozers had knocked down every structure in the area, destroying the homes and the livelihoods of a thousand people. Most eventually found shelter with relatives, or in rural areas, but about a hundred and fifty people, I was told, had nowhere to go, and had built shanties on or near the ruins of their homes.

The project that forced out Mugova and her neighbors was called Operation Murambatsvina, or "Clean Out the Trash." It began without warning on May 19, 2005, when police swept through street markets in downtown Harare, ripping down stalls and beating and arresting hundreds of venders. The next day, the chair of the city's governing commission declared that all "unauthorized" structures in the city would be destroyed, claiming that they had become eyesores and centers of criminal activity. The project, though, was a pretext for remaking Zimbabwe's political map. Two months before Operation Murambatsvina, the circle of security advisers who surround Zimbabwe's President, Robert Mugabe, had warned him that the United States and the European Union were planning to rally slum dwellers and small traders, the backbone of the pro-democracy opposition, into a "Ukrainian-style revolution." Operation Murambatsvina spread through Harare's slums, then to other cities; as many as seven hundred thousand people were made homeless in three months. The United Nations Special Envoy, in a report last August, rebuked the regime for destroying homes and businesses. The operation unfolded with such brutal speed that it became known simply as "the tsunami."

Then, just before the release of the U.N. report, the regime announced a scheme to build thirty-one thousand houses and small factories and shops for those uprooted by Operation Murambatsvina. The plan, called Operation Garikai, or "Stay Well," quickly collapsed, amid allegations of favoritism and corruption. A parliamentary investigation revealed that fewer than five hundred houses had been completed in Harare, where nearly half a million of the displaced live.

In the most notorious case, senior military officials and civil servants loyal to Mugabe's party were given dozens of the houses which were supposed to have gone to those who had been forced out. In May, days before the first anniversary of Operation Murambatsvina, according to the *Herald*, a state-owned newspaper, the police in Harare arrested another 10,244 "vagrants, street kids and other disorderly elements." A police spokesperson said that they would be "relocated" to "homes" in rural areas.



Mugabe may have beggared his country, but he is still the independence hero.

MARK ULRIKSEN

Robert Mugabe came to power in April, 1980, after waging a thirteen-year-long guerrilla war against the white-supremacist regime of what was then Rhodesia. For his first ten years in office, despite a pattern of repression and the creation of a de-facto one-party state, Mugabe was widely praised as one of the post-colonial era's most progressive leaders. He guaranteed educational opportunities for Zimbabwe's blacks, who had no access to most secondary schools and universities. High-school enrollment, which had been about two per cent at the time of independence, grew to seventy per cent by 1990, and Zimbabwe's literacy rate rose from forty-five per cent to nearly eighty per cent in the same period. Mugabe also tried to persuade the country's two hundred thousand whites, including its forty-five hundred commercial farmers, to stay. In the mid-nineties, when I was based in Nairobi as a correspondent, a visit to Zimbabwe, with its game reserves and prosperous cities, served as a welcome escape from the ramshackle kleptocracy of Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi.

The climate changed a few years later, when the National Liberation War Veterans Association, a group of self-proclaimed ex-fighters, pressured Mugabe into giving its members cash, medical care, free education, and, finally, land. In 2000, the government began forcibly redistributing commercial farms and ranches owned by whites: thugs armed with clubs, machetes, and rifles terrorized, assaulted, and, on at least a dozen occasions, murdered the owners. Later, Mugabe told thousands of supporters at a rally that his policy of reconciliation with white Zimbabweans had been an error. "When you show mercy to your former enemy . . . you think you are being noble. But, if you ask me now how I feel about it, I think we made a mistake," he said. War veterans and Presidential cronies took over most of the farms, fired the black laborers, and, in many cases, ruined the enterprises. The dismantling of Zimbabwe's farms, which had earned about half of the country's foreign exchange, precipitated the collapse of the economy.

During the past five years, thousands of businesses have closed. At least seventy per cent of Zimbabweans are unemployed, up from twenty-five per cent fifteen years ago, and in April the inflation rate soared to over a thousand per cent, the world's highest. As many as thirty per cent of secondary-school students have dropped out, because they cannot afford tuition. Mugabe's critics charge that funds destined for H.I.V. treatment and education are routinely diverted to government ministers and other high-ranking officials. One-fifth of the population is infected with H.I.V., and an average of four hundred people a day die of AIDS-related illnesses. The life expectancy of a Zimbabwean woman has dropped from sixty-one years, in 1991, to thirty-four years, the lowest in the world, according to the World Health Organization. "What Mugabe has done to this country is despicable," Peta Thornycroft, a Zimbabwean journalist, told me. "He has destroyed the second-most-industrialized country in Africa. He has wrecked the infrastructure, wrecked education and health care. His only concern has been his own safety, his own power. He is a vain man, so it's a mystery why he is not trying to do something about his legacy. He must know there's nobody left who can write him a good obituary."

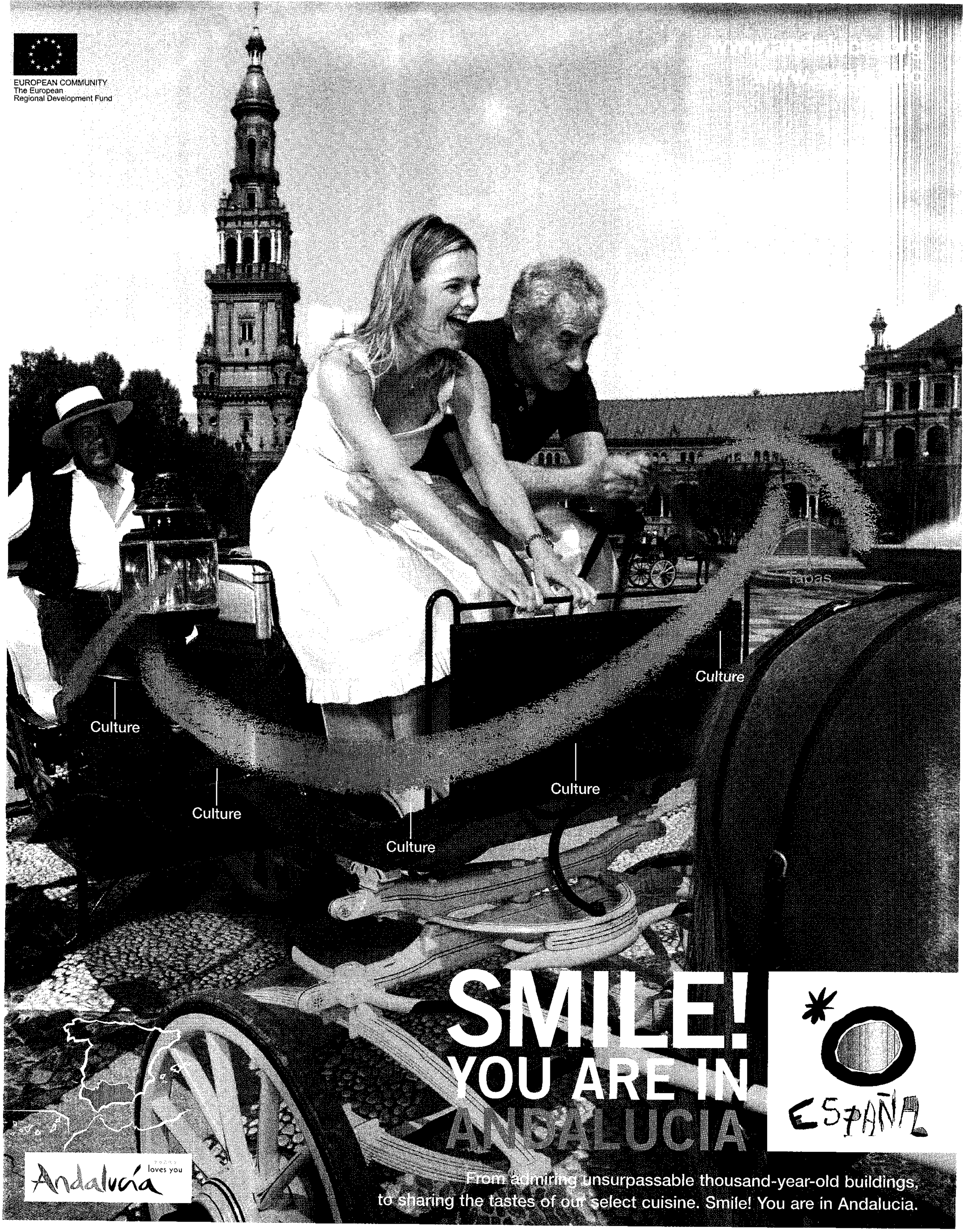
I met Thornycroft in a coffee shop on the outskirts of Harare. She is a gray-haired woman in her fifties who has spent most of her adult life reporting from southern Africa. For the past four years, she has been working in violation of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, passed in 2002, which has stifled most public criticism of Mugabe and requires all journalists to be accredited with the Media and Information Commission or face imprisonment. Following passage of the Act, the government, prodded by its hard-line Minister of Information, Jonathan Moyo, has jailed scores of reporters and closed three newspapers. Thornycroft was arrested in 2002, on charges of impersonating a journalist, and now she has to be especially cautious. "I can't take photographs, I can't interview people with a microphone," Thornycroft, who files reports for newspapers and radio in South Africa and Great Britain, told me. "Instead, I'm always thinking, Oh, God, if I do that I'll wind up in the slammer." The *Daily News*, which exposed corruption within the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and the torture and beatings of anti-Mugabe activists, was attacked three times; no one was killed or injured, but printing presses and other equipment were destroyed. The Supreme Court shut down the paper in September, 2003.

Meanwhile, other critics have got bolder. The U.S. Ambassador, Christopher Dell, gave a speech to Zimbabwean university students last November in which he accused Mugabe of "gross mismanagement of the economy and corrupt rule." African leaders who once ignored Mugabe's corruption and human-rights abuses—killing dissidents, withholding emergency food aid from the regime's opponents—are starting to lose patience. Last August, the South African government offered Zimbabwe a desperately needed loan of hundreds of millions of dollars, provided Mugabe agreed to implement political and economic reforms. After Mugabe rejected the conditions attached to it, South Africa withdrew the offer. The refusal prompted an angry warning from Mugabe to President Thabo Mbeki, who for years had pursued a much criticized policy of "quiet diplomacy," to "keep away" from Zimbabwe's internal affairs.

Mugabe, who is eighty-two, recently indicated that he will step down when his term expires, in 2008. He is putting the finishing touches on a retirement home: a ten-million-dollar, pagoda-style villa, designed by Serbian architects. But Mugabe appears very much in control; he is still buying the allegiance of military and police commanders, and the internal security apparatus, the Central Intelligence Organization, keeps close watch for any signs of dissent. The country is widely believed to be riddled with C.I.O. agents and informants. "Every attempt at protest has been decisively crushed by the state," Raymond Majongwe, the leader of the Progressive Teachers' Union, a syndicate that has supported the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, told me. "Mugabe has won it. He has won it big time."

That certainly seemed to be the case on a blazing hot afternoon in April, when Mugabe attended the annual Independence Day celebration at Harare's National Stadium. Fifty thousand people were in the seats when Mugabe appeared on the field, two hours after his scheduled arrival. Joined by his second wife, Grace, who is some forty years his junior, and his three children, Mugabe looked serene, in a crisp gray suit covered with medals and draped in a green sash. He may have beggared his country, but he is still the Big Man, the independence hero, the African leader who had brought down the white élite; for the moment, at least, the people were with him. He watched a parade of Zimbabwe's Air Force, Army, and police, and, overhead, a precision formation of Chinese-made Zimbabwean Air Force fighter jets. Then, for an hour, he lectured the cheering spectators. He disparaged countrymen who had gone to seek a better life in England, where many have found jobs as low-paid private nurses. They were "the BBC," or "British Bum Cleaners," he said, provoking laughter from the crowd. He shook his fist as he declared, "Anyone who dares go against the security and stability of our country will be inviting the full wrath of the law to descend

"We've changed our investment strategy."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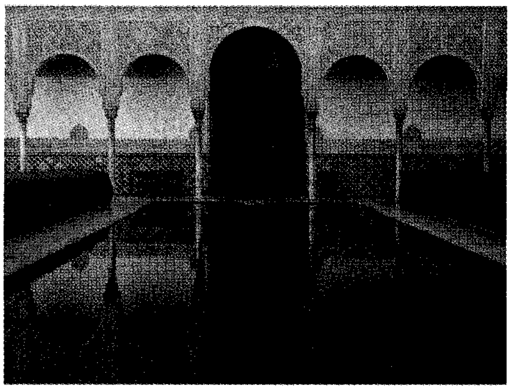
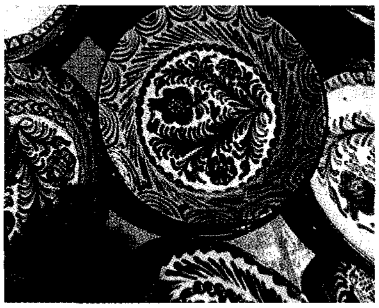


Treasures of Andalucía

At the southernmost portion of Spain, the eight provinces that comprise Andalucía embrace craggy mountains, immortal cities, and golden beaches bathed by the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Five of the provinces hug the coast, and all enjoy a warm, sensuous clime. From the Arabic Al-Andalus ("land of the west"), this region is where the Spanish character is most tangible and its history, palpable.

It was from Seville, the region's capital, where world explorers ventured forth. Its landmark Giralda, a bell tower and former minaret, was completed in 1197. Alcázar Palace, tucked behind it, is another masterwork of Moorish design and architecture.



Elsewhere in the region, the Mezquita, a mosque dating from 994, characterizes Córdoba, while the Moorish fortresses of Almería and Málaga remain those cities' signatures.

Yet of all the Andalucian structures that transport visitors back in time, it is Granada's magnificent Alhambra palace that is among the most visited monuments in the world. The fourteenth-century hilltop citadel is considered one of Europe's outstanding examples of Islamic architecture.

The great pleasure of Andalucía today is that its historic treasures are surrounded by natural beauty and colorful cities. Cádiz has its bay; Huelva, the marshlands; and Jaén, its olive trees. In the outlying regions, travelers can sunbathe on fine-sand beaches or enjoy winter sports at Sierra Nevada, the Continent's southernmost ski resort.

In the romantic city of Carmen and Don Juan, a spirit of joy spills out from Seville's lively outdoor cafés, echoes through the narrow streets of the historic quarter, and fills sunny squares, all scented with the city's ubiquitous orange blossoms.

Jerez, Spain's center of sherry production, welcomes visitors to bodegas, where they can sample varieties ranging from sweet to extra-dry. The town's world-renowned Horse Fair, held each year, is an equine beauty pageant that includes endurance trials, dressage, and carriage rides.

Days spent in Andalucía not only seem like a celebration; many literally are: Each town in the region honors its own patron saint, and more than 3,000 annual fiestas—including fairs, carnivals, reenacted battles, harvest events, and holy weeks—expose visitors to the soul of Spain.

TOP, L-R: ©HOWARD SAYER/ALAMY, © PICTURENET/CORBIS; *INSET:* COURTESY OF TURESPAÑA

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mercilessly on him or on those who follow him."

Mugabe appears determined to retain influence after his retirement. The Joint Operations Command—the military, police, and intelligence chiefs who are Mugabe's most trusted advisers—is focussed on insuring a smooth transition. A possible successor is Joyce Mujuru, one of the country's two Vice-Presidents and a Mugabe favorite. Mujuru, who is in her early fifties, joined Mugabe's guerrilla army as a teen-ager, in the mid-nineteen-seventies, and achieved a measure of fame during the independence war by shooting down a Rhodesian Air Force helicopter with an AK-47. "I lay on my back, aimed and fired," she recalled in a recent newspaper interview. "Bullets hit the machine and it fell out of the sky." This feat earned her the nom de guerre Spillblood. In recent years, she has compared herself to Winnie Mandela. "My war experience changed my entire life," Mujuru said recently. "I became very, very strong and learned to make decisions and not to wait for men to decide everything." Her husband is Solomon Mujuru, the former commander of the armed forces and a Mugabe confidant. The Mujurus own three commercial farms seized from white Zimbabweans, as well as the majority stake in one of Zimbabwe's richest mining conglomerates.

But Mujuru's ascension, and the continued dominance of ZANU-PF, is not assured. She must win the next Presidential election, scheduled for 2008, and voting in Zimbabwe is not always predictable. The monitoring of polling stations by human-rights groups and other independent observers has made it difficult, especially in urban areas such as Harare and Bulawayo, for the regime to engage in its traditional methods of vote manipulation—ballot-box stuffing and intimidation. Moreover, the Joint Operations Command is said to consider Mujuru incapable of winning even a partially rigged election. The Command may press Zimbabwe's parliament to pass a constitutional amendment that would delay the vote until 2010. Then Mugabe, just before retiring, would appoint Mujuru as Interim President, after which the power of incumbency would more likely allow her to win the Presidency by a popular vote.

There are other plausible scenarios. If unhappiness with Mugabe and his party grows, the pro-democracy opposition could gain seats in parliament and, given the right candidate, win the Presidency. There is also a slim possibility that popular anger will result in an organized campaign of large street protests. John Makumbe, a professor of politics at the University of Zimbabwe, believes that Mugabe has realized belatedly that "he has run out of solutions" and has started to panic: "People see a paper tiger and they think it's real. In fact, it's scared, wetting itself, with its tail between its legs."

For the past six years, hopes for a democratic transformation have rested on Morgan Tsvangirai, a high-school dropout, former nickel miner, and trade-union boss from south-central Zimbabwe. Tsvangirai became a visible political figure in 1998, as the chairman of a coalition of labor leaders, lawyers, academics, church officials, and students which worked to revise the country's constitution. The reform effort was stymied by Mugabe, but in September, 1999, its leaders created the Movement for Democratic Change, which, chaired by Tsvangirai, has mounted an unprecedented challenge to the dictatorship.

Tsvangirai is a charismatic speaker, and Peta Thornycroft described him as a gifted campaigner, especially among the rural poor. "He arrives in his red *bakkie* [pickup truck], and the crowd goes wild. For people who have no lives, no hope, he brings a rush of excitement," she said. In June, 2000, the M.D.C. shocked ZANU-PF by winning fifty-seven of a hundred and twenty contested seats in parliament. In the 2002 Presidential election, Tsvangirai, too, demonstrated that he had strong popular backing. Opposition supporters were attacked, and days later Tsvangirai was charged with being part of a conspiracy to assassinate Mugabe. His trial, for capital treason, lasted nearly two years, and ended with his acquittal, in October, 2004.

Tsvangirai, who is fifty-four, lives in a modest ranch house set behind high walls in a leafy neighborhood in northern Harare, several miles from the city center. When I arrived, the house was crowded with advisers, supporters, and members of his security staff. A stocky, moonfaced man, Tsvangirai met me just outside and led me to a bungalow at the rear of his property. The office was lined with books—David McCullough's "John Adams," Nelson Mandela's autobiography, Rudolph Giuliani's "Leadership"—and was dominated by a poster of Mandela, which bore the legend "There Is No Easy Walk to Freedom Anywhere." He was eager to talk about the good health of the M.D.C. Eighteen thousand people had shown up at the Party congress in March, he told me, one of the biggest turnouts in M.D.C. history. He was about to launch another "massive" civil-disobedience campaign, he said. At a funeral the previous day for Mugabe's chief bodyguard, who had died at fifty-two, possibly of an AIDS-related illness, the dictator had issued a blunt threat to Tsvangirai. "Just eat your mealy meal and keep quiet," he said. "If you really want to die, then [protest] and we will definitely kill you." Tsvangirai was unfazed.

He was less comfortable talking about a feud that had recently divided the Party into two factions, which had raised questions about Tsvangirai's ability to effectively lead the opposition. The M.D.C. was always a shaky coalition—a "giant umbrella," one opposition leader told me. About two years ago, rumors began to spread that a group of academics and lawyers, most of them from the country's largest minority tribe, the Ndebele (Tsvangirai belongs to the majority ethnic group, the Shona), were plotting to remove Tsvangirai as chairman and install a rival from their group. Members of Tsvangirai's personal security force assaulted suspected plotters, and although Tsvangirai disciplined some of those involved, several opposition figures charged that Tsvangirai had allowed "thugs" and "criminals" to take control of the movement.

When I asked Tsvangirai about the allegations of violence, he scowled and said, "There was a single incident and I dealt with it decisively. Twenty-eight people were expelled from the Party." That may have been so, but the incident deepened conflicts within the M.D.C., and by the end of last year it had split. Tsvangirai is still widely admired, though, and, despite many threats, he continues to defy Mugabe. "He has overcome all the hurdles they have thrown in his way, including sabotage charges, treason charges," John Makumbe, one of Tsvangirai's strongest supporters, told me. "He has refused to compromise."

Tsvangirai has urged his supporters to focus on Mugabe, "our common enemy," but the divisions in the opposition are clear. The next day, I went to a rally of Tsvangirai's faction in southern Harare. Several thousand Tsvangirai supporters had gathered in a green square flanked by the General Post Office and an OK Supermarket. The subject of the speeches was supposed to be Mugabe's abuses, but the rally's organizers had a different agenda. "We now have other people who claim to be the M.D.C.," one local Party leader declared. "We have to deal with such people before we tackle ZANU-PF. " He finished his speech with a vow in the local tribal language: "*Tinotanga tavagobara*"—"We will stamp them out."

Tsvangirai's announcement of a new civil-disobedience campaign attracted some surprising support. A couple of days later, I went to see Jonathan Moyo, the former Minister of Information, who in the past year has turned from acting as Mugabe's mouthpiece into being one of his harshest critics. I was wary of announcing my presence to a man who had put dozens of reporters in jail. (I had entered the country on a tourist visa, and was working without accreditation, a crime punishable by two years in prison.) But a Western diplomat had suggested that Moyo would be grateful for the media attention—"He needs friends now," he said. Moyo was trying to befriend Tsvangirai and organize a coalition of anti-Mugabe forces, but he was regarded with little enthusiasm. "Moyo is lambasting ZANU-PF, but he is in it up to here," Makumbe told me. "He has never said, 'It was a mistake to belong to that party.' "

Moyo, a tall, skinny man with wire-rimmed glasses and an owlish visage, met me in the driveway of his large home, off a busy thoroughfare in northern Harare. He proffered a stiff handshake and a nervous smile, and escorted me into a sunlit lounge beside his house. He was wearing a dark jacket and a white shirt, and he looked professorial; there was nothing about him to suggest the ZANU-PF official who had terrorized the press. He directed me to a sofa at one end of the room, then sat at the other end, about thirty feet away. His teen-age daughter poked her head in to ask about a family matter and he excused himself. He returned minutes later with an apologetic look.

Moyo graduated from the University of Southern California in the early nineteen-eighties, earned his master's degree in politics there, and became a popular lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe. In 1993, he moved to Nairobi, as the program officer of the Ford Foundation, but he left after four years to take a teaching post at the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg. (Moyo was subsequently accused of embezzling eighty-eight thousand dollars of Foundation funds. The charge is making its way through the Kenyan courts; he faces similar charges in South Africa.) In 1999, he returned to Zimbabwe; a year later, he was appointed Minister of Information, and quickly turned into the regime's most ardent apologist. (Makumbe and others speculate that Moyo, having run into legal troubles related to the alleged embezzlement, was desperate for powerful allies.) Moyo wrote jingles for state-owned radio, praising Mugabe and his land seizures as well as the national soccer team. He oversaw the expulsion of foreign journalists, denied accreditation to others, and threatened to charge several Zimbabwean reporters with espionage. In return, Moyo enjoyed many privileges, including a lodge near Hwange National Park, the country's most popular game reserve, and thousands of acres of ranch land seized from a white Zimbabwean.

Moyo eventually became too ambitious. In the run-up to the parliamentary elections of March, 2005, he asked Mugabe to let him run as the ZANU-PF candidate in his home district. Mugabe refused, having promised the candidacy to an unknown female competitor. Moyo decided to run as an independent, and Mugabe fired him, accusing him of plotting a coup. Moyo underwent a sudden conversion: the regime's "spin doctor" became a champion of democracy. "Mugabe was infuriated with Moyo, and their relationship degenerated into name-calling

REVISIONIST DREAM

Well, she didn't kill herself that afternoon.
It was a mild day in October, we sat outside
over sandwiches. She said she had begun

to practice yoga, take piano lessons,
rewrite her drama rife with lust and pride
and so she didn't kill herself that afternoon,

hugged me, went home, cranked the garage doors open,
scuffed through the garish leaves, orange and red,
that brought on grief. She said she had begun

to translate Akhmatova, her handsome Russian
piano teacher rendering the word-for-word
so she didn't kill herself that afternoon.

She cooked for him, made quiche and coq au vin.
He stood the Czerny method on its head
while her fingers flew. She said she had begun

accelerandos, Julia Child, and some
expand-a-lung deep breaths to do in bed
so she didn't kill herself that afternoon.
We ate our sandwiches. The dream blew up at dawn . . .

—*Maxine Kumin*

games," Makumbe told me. As the parliamentary candidate of the United People's Movement ("We will rock them!" is its slogan), Moyo, who had already made himself popular in his district by donating computers to public schools, won the seat. On the campaign trail, Moyo declared, "We are a young, dynamic society led by an old, stagnant clique." After the election, he called the house-demolition program "barbaric" and said that it was making Mugabe a pariah in Africa.

Moyo told me that he had intended to push Mugabe toward "genuine reform," but he realized after five years that the dictator was "incapable of change." He went on, "He believes that the people are still with him, that the only ones who do not support him are those in urban areas who come into contact with Western propaganda—the BBC, CNN. He lives in his own world." Mugabe's closest advisers, Moyo told me, were "tired people who have failed to pass on the baton to a new generation. They have no ideology. What they think about is their own security, about keeping the succession an in-house affair."

Moyo is quick to describe his falling-out with his former boss. "Mugabe called me in and he said, 'If you leave the Party, that is going to bring a lot of negative consequences on you and your family.' He meant that he would unleash the Party and state machinery against me, and make it very difficult for me to operate, to live." Moyo went on, "He didn't specify what he meant, but his demeanor, his disposition, the look on his face all said, 'You're finished.' " But despite Moyo's estrangement from Mugabe, M.D.C. leaders shunned him in parliament, ridiculed his supposed change of heart, and berated him for having served in the cabinet.

I asked Moyo if he felt any regret about being part of Mugabe's system and sharing in its benefits. "The record will show that the farm I got, I'm struggling with," he told me. "I got derelict land, previously used for ranching, that did not have a single building on it." In fact, Moyo said, Mugabe had offered him a far better farm than the one he accepted. "I asked myself, What would it mean if it came out in public that I had gotten a huge farmhouse, with huge infrastructure? The house wouldn't be mine. It's not God-given; people put their sweat into this." Now, he said, he was working the land that the regime had allocated to him, building it into a productive enterprise.

When I asked Moyo about his role in suppressing dissent, he seemed to speak carefully. "Various people who were part of the system, who were making decisions, made mistakes," he said. "Responsibility falls on everyone." But his antipathy toward the press remained intact: "The foreign media acted irresponsibly. They made a bad situation worse. In the 2000 elections, many news organizations staged events. They believed their role was to expedite the downfall of a dictator."

On a recent rainy night in Harare, I joined a group of students from the University of Zimbabwe who had gathered clandestinely to meet the country's newest would-be savior. The encounter took place in a drafty garage at the home of an opposition member of parliament, and the seventy young people in attendance were both excited and anxious. Political meetings of more than four people without a permit have been banned in Zimbabwe since 2002, by the Public Order and Security Act, and although the odds of being caught were slim, everyone faced a possible one-year jail term and a heavy fine. As helpers carried in bottles of Bollinger beer, Coke, whiskey, and brandy and set them on a table, Trudy Stevenson, a diminutive, gray-haired woman who is one of two white members of parliament, said, smiling, "Grab your drinks now, because it's possible you'll be spending the rest of the night in a cell."

The man they had come to see, Arthur Mutambara, is a tall forty-year-old, with a high, sloping forehead and a skull so elongated that it calls to mind a Giacometti sculpture. Mutambara became prominent in the late eighties, when, as the president of the student union at the University of Zimbabwe, he organized early protests against Mugabe's one-party rule. In those days, Peta Thornycroft recalls, Mutambara was a straight-A student and a "hooligan," who tossed tear-gas cannisters back at riot police. In 1989, after weeks of violent protests on campus, Mugabe ordered the university closed and had Mutambara arrested and jailed for two weeks. "He was gorgeous, articulate, hu-

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morous, warm, and he couldn't have cared less about the consequences of his actions," Thornycroft told me. "He was everybody's dream of a student leader." Mutambara's bravery was proved when he refused to kneel at Mugabe's feet as he received his diploma, in 1991—the only student in the history of the university who failed to show Mugabe such obligatory respect. After his graduation, he went to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. Then he moved to the United States, where he worked as a visiting professor of engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and as a consultant for McKinsey & Company, among other jobs.

Four years ago, Mutambara moved to Johannesburg, joined the Standard Bank as a director for new technology, and introduced electronic cash payments and Internet banking to a dozen countries in Africa. "My aim was always about expanding my value proposition," he told me, before the student meeting. In 2003, he quit the bank and started his own consulting firm, the Africa Technology & Business Institute. "I have the pedigree," he said. "I'm an African, so why can't I set up a consulting firm for Africans? Why can't I leverage my wisdom in an African environment? We are sick and tired of being consumers of knowledge. We want to participate in the construction of knowledge." He married a Zimbabwean woman who had been raised in France and educated in England; they have two sons. During his time in South Africa, he stayed in touch with the leaders of the Movement for Democratic Change, watched Tsvangirai's treason trial, and tried to mediate between factions after the M.D.C. split. In January, 2006, representatives of the breakaway group called to ask Mutambara to become the faction's chairman and front man. He moved back to Zimbabwe, and the following month he made his first political appearance, at the group's congress in Bulawayo.

But Mutambara had been away for a decade and a half, and establishing credibility as a leader was not proving easy. His rallies had been sparsely attended, and his speaking style drifted between stiff and manic. Some critics portrayed him as a carpetbagger who was out of touch with the financial desperation of most Zimbabweans. "Mutambara doesn't even know how much a loaf of bread costs," one student whispered to me as we waited for Mutambara to start talking. The *Herald*, the *Mail*, and other organs of government propaganda were devoting extended coverage to Mutambara's rallies, playing up the rivalry between the two factions. "We were a cracked giant, and now we've crumbled in two," Raymond Majongwe, the chairman of the Progressive Teachers' Union, told me. "The ruling party couldn't be more pleased."

At eight-thirty, Mutambara faced the audience. "Mugabe declares himself a liberator," he said. "But he now represents a negation of what those freedom fighters died for." Zimbabwe, he insisted, had the potential to become "the next Singapore, the next Malaysia," but the economy had degenerated into one of "buy foreign exchange, sell foreign exchange; buy fuel, sell fuel; don't produce—just be a dealer." Then he addressed the sundering of the M.D.C. "The jury is out as to which one of us is legitimate," he said. "We don't condemn the other faction, because we both have the same agenda." A few moments later, however, he spoke less generously about Tsvangirai. "All the people around my brother Morgan say, 'He is an ignoramus, an idiot, but he has the support of people.' Is that the right side to be on?" Mutambara paused, and smiled. "My brother Morgan," he said, "is sick in the head."

Before leaving Zimbabwe, I met again with Mutambara, who had been introducing himself to ambassadors from the United States, Japan, Canada, South Africa, and Spain. Thornycroft had called Mutambara "the best-educated political leader in Africa," and when I arrived at the house he owns in northern Harare, which has served as a base during the past six years, Mutambara led me into a den and pointed to his bookshelves. He had neatly organized them into sections that reflected his broad range of interests. There were science and engineering texts, African-American history books, business manuals, biographies. (Like Tsvangirai, he had a copy of McCullough's "John Adams.") In one corner, he had filed the speeches he had given at Oxford and at universities in the United States; in another, he kept a pile of hip-hop CDs. "Mutambara is not just a scientist," he told me, referring to himself, as he sometimes does, in the third person. Mutambara apparently approached his life as an ongoing self-improvement course. This methodical pursuit of excellence extended to his own family. He proudly showed me snapshots of his infant son, who had been born on January 12th, the month that Mutambara made his latest transformation, into political leader. The boy's two middle names were expressions in Shona, Zimbabwe's main tribal language, Mutambara said, which meant "succeed in spite of adversity," and "revolutionary courage to self-transcend and live a legacy."

Mutambara is beguiling and smart, but he can also seem glib; and the sense that he has flitted from career to career undermines his attempts at gravitas. The role that he played in the late eighties, as a critic of Mugabe at a time when almost nobody dared oppose the dictator, had established his courage and integrity. But all this was long ago. While Tsvangirai, for the past decade, was working for the cause inside Zimbabwe, Mutambara enjoyed the good life abroad and polished his résumé. Tsvangirai has been damaged by intra-party conflicts, but he remains the most promising of the opposition figures.

Earlier that day, I had talked again with Tsvangirai. "Everyone is reeling under the current regime. The sense of crisis is urgent," he told me, but added that he was "reconciled to the fact that you cannot put a time frame to your struggle." His expression was frank. "Look, we have had setbacks, but we are confident we can rebuild the resistance and confront the dictatorship. I'm an optimist, but I'm a realistic optimist. You cannot just wish people to be on the streets. You have to work for it. You have to remove people's fear. Building a movement is not a one-day wonder. Come back in a year's time. You will see change in this country." ♦

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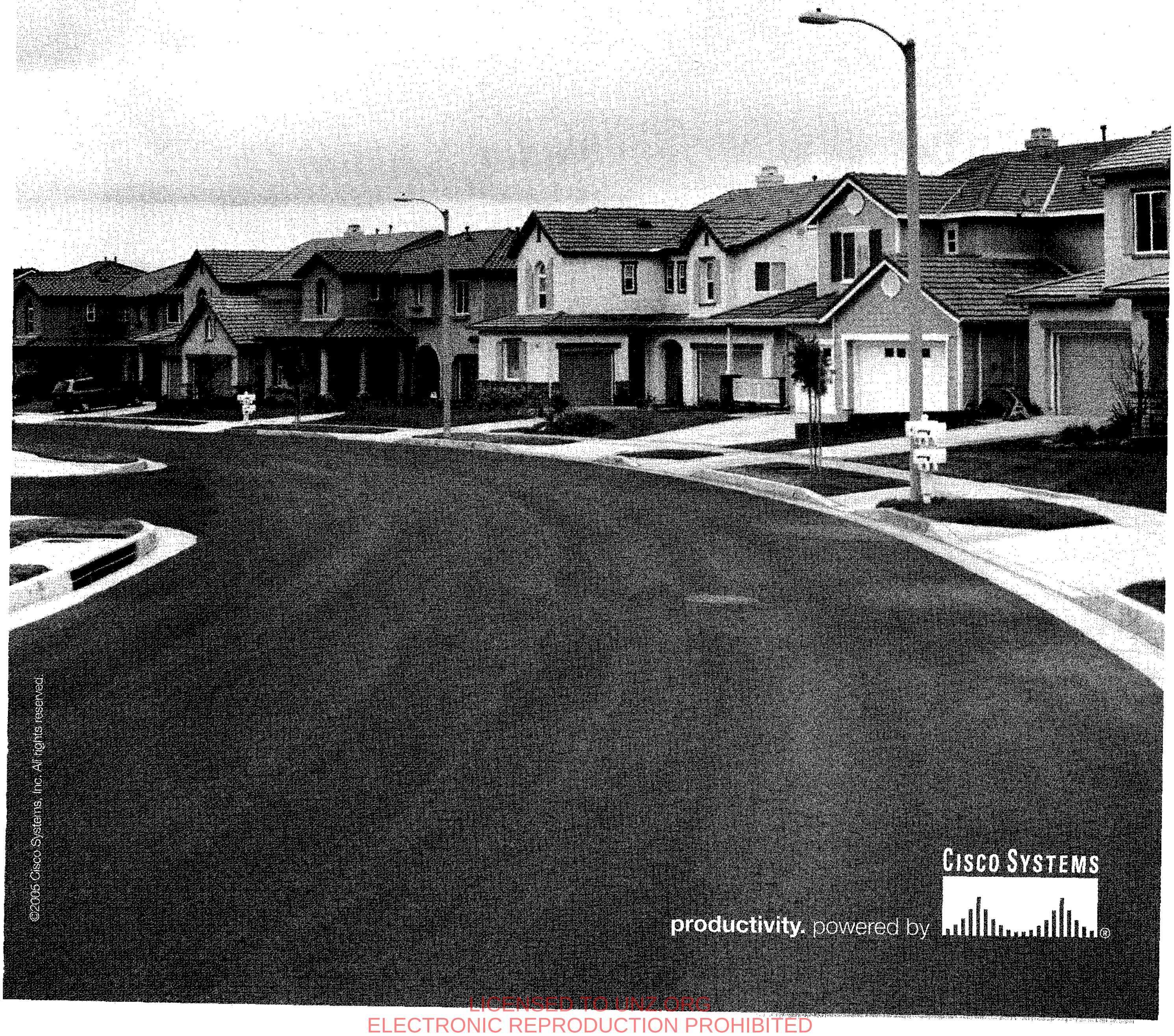
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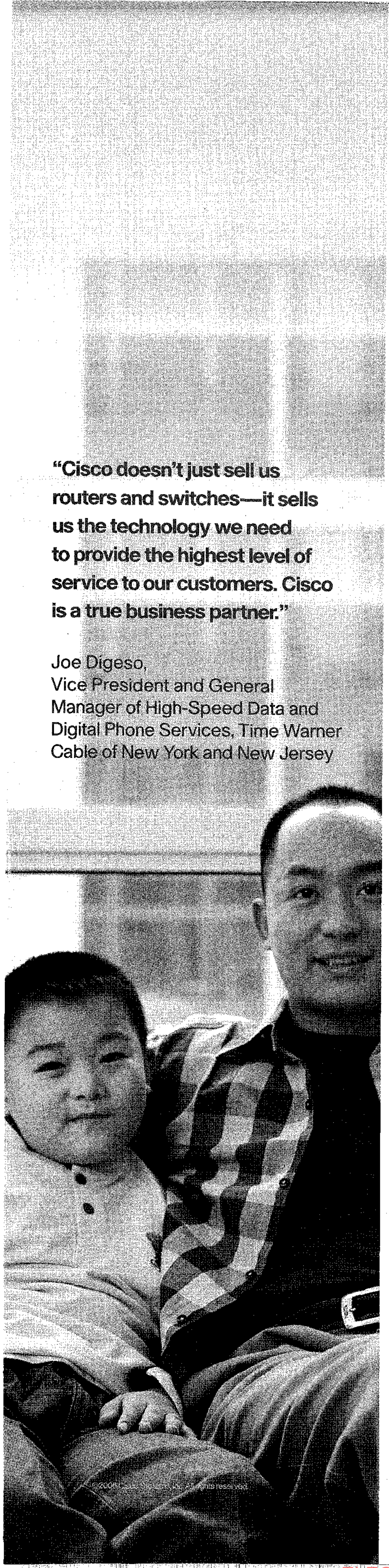

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WHAT I LEARNED

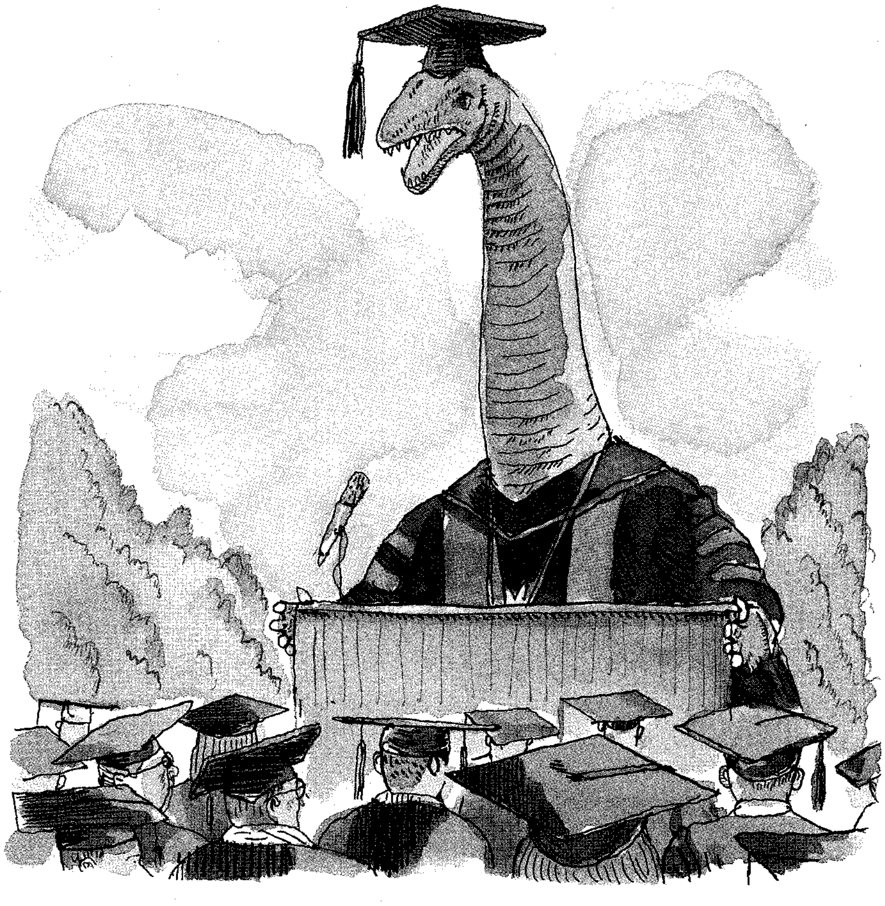
And what I said at Princeton.

BY DAVID SEDARIS

It's been interesting to walk around campus this afternoon, as when *I* went to Princeton things were completely different. This chapel, for instance—I remember when it was just a clearing, cordoned off with sharp sticks. Prayer was compulsory back then, and you couldn't just fake it by moving your lips; you had to know the words, and really mean them. I'm dating myself, but this was before Jesus Christ. We worshipped a God named Sashatiba, who had five eyes, including one right here, on the Adam's apple. None of us ever met him, but word had it that he might appear at any moment, so we were always at the ready. *Whatever you do, don't look at his neck*, I used to tell myself.

It's funny now, but I thought about it a lot. Some people thought about it a little too much, and it really affected their academic performance. Again, I date myself, but back then we were on a pass-fail system. If you passed, you got to live, and if you failed you were burned alive on a pyre that's now the Transgender Studies Building. Following the first grading period, the air was so thick with smoke you could barely find your way across campus. There were those who said that it smelled like meat, no different from a barbecue, but I could tell the difference. I mean, really. Since when do you grill hair? Or those ugly, chunky shoes we all used to wear?

It kept you on your toes, though, I'll say that much. If I'd been burned alive because of bad grades, my parents would have killed me, especially my father, who meant well but was just a little too gung ho for my taste. He had the whole outfit: Princeton breastplate, Princeton nightcap; he even got the velvet cape with the tiger head hanging like a rucksack from between the shoulder blades. In those days, the mascot was a sabretooth, so you can imagine how silly it looked, and how painful it was to sit down. Then, there was his wagon, completely covered with decals and bumper stickers: "I hold my horses for Ivy League schools," "My son was accepted at the best university in the United States and all I got was a bill for a hundred and sixty-eight thousand dollars." On and on, which was just so . . . *wrong*.



What we never could have fathomed at graduation was how stuff happens.

BARRY BLITT

One of the things they did back then was start you off with a modesty seminar, an eight-hour session that all the freshmen had to sit through. It might be different today, but in my time it took the form of a role-playing exercise, my classmates and I pretending to be graduates, and the teacher assuming the part of an average citizen: the soldier, the bloodletter, the whore with a heart of gold.

"Tell me, young man. Did you attend a university of higher learning?"

To anyone holding a tool or a weapon, we were trained to respond, "What? Me go to college?" If, on the other hand, the character held a degree, you were allowed to say, "Sort of," or, sometimes, "I think so."

"So where do you sort of think you went?"

And it was the next bit that you had to get just right. Inflection was everything, and it took the foreign students forever to master it.

"Where do you sort of think you went?"

And we'd say, "Umm, Princeton?"—as if it were an oral exam, and we weren't quite sure that this was the correct answer.

"Princeton, my goodness," the teacher would say. "That must have been quite something!"

You had to let him get it out, but once he started in on how brilliant and committed you must be it was time to

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hold up your hands, saying, "Oh, it isn't that hard to get into."

Then he'd say, "Really? But I heard —"

"Wrong," you'd tell him. "You heard wrong. It's not that great of a school."

This was the way it had to be done—you had to play it down, which wasn't easy when your dad was out there, reading your acceptance letter into a bullhorn.

I needed to temper my dad's enthusiasm a bit, and so I announced that I would be majoring in patricide. The Princeton program was very strong back then, the best in the country, but it wasn't the sort of thing your father could get too worked up about. Or, at least, most fathers wouldn't. Mine was over the moon. "Killed by a Princeton graduate!" he said. "And my own son, no less."

My mom was actually jealous. "So what's wrong with matricide?" she asked. "What, I'm not good enough to murder?"

They started bickering, so in order to make peace I promised to consider a double major.

"And how much more is that going to cost us?" they said.

Those last few months at home were pretty tough, but then I started my freshman year, and got caught up in the life of the mind. My idol-worship class was the best, but my dad didn't get it. "What the hell does that have to do with patricide?" he asked.

And I said, "Umm. *Everything*?"

He didn't understand that it's all connected, that one subject leads to another and forms a kind of chain that raises its head and nods like a cobra when you're sucking on a bong after three days of no sleep. On acid it's even wilder, and appears to eat things. But, not having gone to college, my dad had no concept of a well-rounded liberal-arts education. He thought that all my classes should be murder-related, with no lunch breaks or anything. Fortunately, it doesn't work that way.

In truth, I had no idea what I wanted to study, so for the first few years I took everything that came my way. I enjoyed pillaging and astrology, but the thing that ultimately stuck was comparative literature. There wasn't much of it to compare back then, no more than a handful of epic poems and one novel about a lady detective, but that's part of what I liked about it. The field was new, and full of possibilities, but try telling that to my parents.

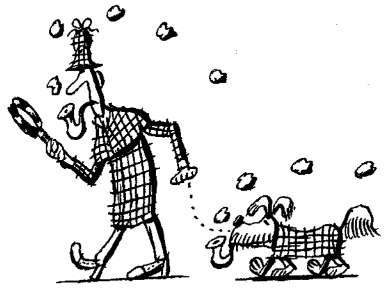
"You mean you *won't* be killing us?" my mother said. "But I told everyone you were going for that double major."

Dad followed his "I'm so disappointed" speech with a lecture on career opportunities. "You're going to study literature and get a job doing *what*?" he said. "*Literaturizing*?"

We spent my entire vacation arguing; then, just before I went back to school, my father approached me in my bedroom. "Promise me you'll keep an open mind," he said. And, as he left, he slipped an engraved dagger into my book bag.

I had many fine teachers during my years at Princeton, but the one I think of most often was my fortune-telling professor—a complete hag with wild gray hair, warts the size of new potatoes, the whole nine yards. She taught us to forecast the weather up to two weeks in advance, but ask her for anything weightier and you were likely to be disappointed.

The alchemy majors wanted to know how much money they'd be making after graduation. "Just give us an approximate figure," they'd say, and the professor would shake her head and cover her crystal ball with a little cozy given to her by one of her previous classes. When it came to our futures, she drew the line, no matter how hard we begged—and, I mean, we really tried. I was as let down as the next guy, but, in retrospect, I can see that she acted in our best interests. Look at yourself on the day that you graduated from college, then look at yourself today. I did that recently, and it was, like, "What the hell happened?"



The answer, of course, is life. What the hag chose not to foretell—and what we, in our certainty, could not have fathomed—is that stuff comes up. Weird doors open. People fall into things. Maybe the engineering whiz will wind up brewing cider, not because he has to but because he finds it challenging. Who knows? Maybe the athlete will bring peace to all nations, or the class moron will go on to become the President of the United States—though that's more likely to happen at Harvard or Yale, schools that will pretty much let in anybody.

There were those who left Princeton and soared like arrows into the bosoms of power and finance, but I was not one of them. My path was a winding one, with plenty of obstacles along the way. When school was finished, I went back home, an Ivy League graduate with four years' worth of dirty laundry and his whole life ahead of him. "What are you going to do now?" my parents asked.

And I said, "Well, I was thinking of washing some of these underpants."

That took six months. Then I moved on to the shirts.

"Now what?" my parents asked.

And, when I told them I didn't know, they lost what little patience they had left. "What kind of a community-college answer is that?" my mother said. "You went to the best school there is—how can you not know something?"

And I said, "I don't know."

In time, my father stopped wearing his Princeton gear. My mother stopped talking about my "potential," and she and my dad got themselves a brown-and-white puppy. In terms of intelligence, it was just average, but they couldn't see that at all. "Aren't you just the smartest dog in the world?" they'd ask, and the puppy would shake their hands just like I used to do.

My first alumni weekend cheered me up a bit. It was nice to know that I wasn't the only unemployed graduate in the world, but the warm feeling evaporated when I got back home and saw that my parents had given the dog my bedroom. In place of the Princeton pennant they'd bought for my first birthday was a banner reading, "Westminster or bust."

I could see which way the wind was blowing, and so I left, and moved to the city, where a former classmate, a philosophy major, got me a job on his rag-picking crew. When the industry moved overseas—this the doing of *another* former classmate—I stayed put, and eventually found work skinning hides for a ratcatcher, a thin, serious man with the longest beard I had ever seen.

At night, I read and reread the handful of books I'd taken with me when I left home, and eventually, out of boredom as much as anything else, I started to write myself. It wasn't much, at first: character sketches, accounts of my day, parodies of articles in the alumni newsletter. Then, in time, I became more ambitious, and began crafting little stories about my family. I read one of them out loud to the ratcatcher, who'd never laughed at anything but roared at the description of my mother and her puppy. "My mom was just the same," he said. "I graduated from Brown, and two weeks later she was raising falcons on my top bunk!" The story about my dad defecating in his neighbor's well pleased my boss so much that he asked for a copy, and sent it to his own father.

This gave me the confidence to continue, and in time I completed an entire book, which was subsequently published. I presented a first edition to my parents, who started with the story about our neighbor's well, and then got up to close the drapes. Fifty pages later, they were boarding up the door and looking for ways to disguise themselves. Other people had loved my writing, but these two didn't get it at all. "What's wrong?" I asked.

My father adjusted his makeshift turban, and sketched a mustache on my mother's upper lip. "What's wrong?" he said. "I'll tell you what's wrong: you're killing us."

"But I thought that's what you wanted?"

"We did," my mother wept, "but not this way."

It hadn't occurred to me until that moment, but I seemed to have come full circle. What started as a dodge had inadvertently become my life's work, an irony I never could have appreciated had my extraordinary parents not put me through Princeton. ◆

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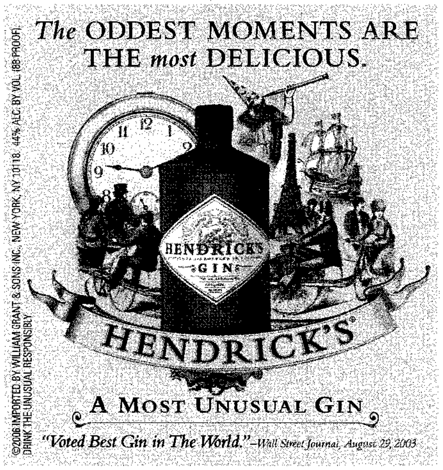

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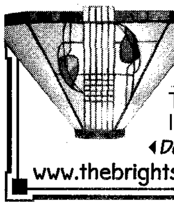

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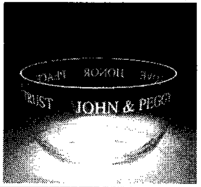

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NOTES OF A GASTRONOME

THE DESSERT LAB

A pastry chef's quest for the new.

BY BILL BUFORD

On my third day at Will Goldfarb's new restaurant, on Cleveland Place, in SoHo, an assessor from the Tower Insurance Company of New York made an unannounced but utterly routine visit. The restaurant, called Room 4 Dessert, had been open for two months. It was long and narrow and furnished with stools. It looked like a bar. The place next door, which was long and narrow, was a bar. The one next to it was a bar, too. In fact, except for Eileen's Special Cheesecake, on the corner, this two-block stretch (Cleveland Place is one of the shortest streets in Manhattan) was pretty much all bars (including the nearby Falls, still open and busy six weeks after a bouncer had been charged with murdering a customer).

Will Goldfarb was devising a one-off eight-course dessert menu. A jello made of basil and chlorophyll would be the green course.

JOOST SWARTE

"So what do you serve?" the assessor was asking. "Mainly spirits?"

"No," Goldfarb replied. "Spirits are five per cent of the business."

"Really? Only five per cent? So it's what—beer, predominantly?"

"Almost no beer," Goldfarb said.

"No beer!" The assessor was openly puzzled. "What, then?"

Goldfarb was at a computer, devising a one-off eight-course dessert menu. Each course was a different color. A jello made of basil and chlorophyll—"the garnish piped inside to look like DNA"—would be the green course. The blue would be "a cotton-candy terrine the color of the sea, but with waves like the ocean." The black featured a black rum gel served in a brioche dyed with squid ink.

"Food," Goldfarb said. "We serve food."

"Food," the man repeated. He looked around. There was no kitchen. There was no gas, and no obvious array of cooking devices, except a toaster and a portable electric oven. The bar was eighteen inches across. There didn't seem to be room for anything except leaning against it and having a drink, although there was a prep area in the back, near one of the two functioning sinks and the toilet. That's where I was, cubing pancetta.

"Oka-a-ay." The assessor pressed on. "What kind of food?"

"Dessert."

"Dessert?" He paused. "Oka-a-ay. And what kind of dessert, exactly?" The assessor was a man accustomed to evasions. "Can you give me some examples? Of your desserts, that is."

In addition to Goldfarb and Ephrain, a new dishwasher, there were three of us in the back. Robert Truitt, twenty-four, who worked from ten in the morning until two in the morning, making sixty different items a day, had prepared a raspberry meringue that he was pouring into a bulletlike machine called a dehydrator; the meringue would remain there, evaporating slowly, for two days, until it had solidified into pink bread. (It looked like an astronaut's meal—a big, flat, compressed marshmallow.) Pamela Yung was Robert's deputy. She was making mango gnocchi by spooning fruit puree into a calcium-chloride solution that seemed to freeze it on contact. (I have no idea how, but the result, crispy orange balls floating in a chemist's tray, were rather miraculous.) My pancetta was for a dish called Picnic. I'd never eaten a dessert made with belly fat. (It was served with tomatoes stewed in olive oil and vanilla.) We stopped what we were doing: just how was Goldfarb going to describe what he served?

He was staring into space, thinking. "Chocolate cake," he said finally. "We make desserts like chocolate cake."

He was lying. He doesn't make chocolate cake—at least not in any form I've known, although at some point Goldfarb might have made one, provided he could subvert it, reconstruct it, and serve it with smoked-spare-ribs ice cream, say, topped with whipped green wasabi-root powder on an edible plate smelling of bacon and eggs that you could take home and have for breakfast. I exaggerate (Goldfarb has never made an edible plate), and I don't exaggerate (he has made edible underwear). Among the dishes Goldfarb prepared when he was "young and stupid" (his description) were gelatine slices served on a naked woman and a rose-petal vapor inhaled through a gas mask.

This commitment to making the next radical thing, whatever it is, and however unnerving it might be to have it in your mouth—dessert as performance art—is a movement of sorts, sometimes called the New Gastronomy, sometimes dismissed as just plain wacko. Every big city seems to have a member, some downtown laser-torching, hyper-techno gastro kid concocting "works" invariably inspired by Ferran Adrià and his brother Alberto, the two chefs of El Bulli, a restaurant outside Barcelona renowned as much for what it does when it's closed (the laboratory season, when cooks are invited to help create new taste configurations for the next year) as for the thirty-five courses served when it's open (the warm months). Unlike most of his gastro peers, Goldfarb has actually worked at El Bulli—for twenty months, including four in the laboratory. He has also been making the next new thing for so long it's starting to seem a little old.

I'd sought out Goldfarb because I wanted to learn about dessert. I now recognize that going to him as a tutor was akin to learning how to drive by hanging around a Nascar racetrack. My interests were pretty basic. I didn't know why dessert was invented or what function in the running of a human organism it was meant to perform. (I wasn't even sure when it was invented. Raising livestock, vegetable farming, the harvesting of grains: these activities are ancient, older than history, and essential to the survival of the species. But when did humankind decide that it also needed crème brûlée?) For instance, I eat a tuna sandwich and an apple, and I understand, more or less, what they give my body. But what do I get out of a piece of Key-lime pie? Desserts are a problem. You're a person who eats them and regrets that you did; or you're one who never eats them; or you eat them and know enough to eat only a little; or else you eat them and eat them until you're done in. That's me. Face to face with a dessert, my judgment goes walkabout. I devour it with unreflecting dispatch, indifferent to its qualities or its composition or the skill of its making, jabbering away, jiggling in my seat, metabolism spinning at maximum revs, sweat beading up inexplicably on my forehead, wondering (while looking out for another helping) how anything could possibly be bad when it manifestly makes you feel so good. And then—betraying an undiagnosed intolerance for milky things, or doughy things, or sugar itself, or just for eating too much—I wake in the night, sick, thinking, How could I possibly have been so stupid to do this again? Dessert frightens me.

The next day didn't begin well for the little restaurant. Ephrain, the dishwasher, hadn't shown up, and Priscella, the bartender, a slim West African art student with long, painted nails ("Your wait staff should be beautiful," Goldfarb told me. "It's very important"), announced that she had visa problems and would be leaving the country soon. (Today, in fact.) Goldfarb had no one to take orders, and, in the event that any could be placed, no one to wash the dishes they'd be served on. He studied Craigslist, convinced that he'd find a new staff there.

Goldfarb is thirty-one. He is tall and lean, with long, thin fingers, the trim torso of a cyclist, and a tight Lance Armstrong-like face that gives little away. He seldom smiles; he is rarely angry. His most conspicuous wardrobe item is a pair of clear-framed plastic glasses with thick lenses, a recent acquisition; until four months ago, he couldn't read the watch on his wrist, and for most of his career he plated dishes from memory—his is of the flypaper kind—because he couldn't see the ingredients. His speech can be quirky, almost foreign (it put me in mind of French Canadians practicing English), as though the time he spent at El Bulli and other European restaurants—he has also worked in France and Italy—had impressed itself on his voice memory and he couldn't undo the impression. (He was born and brought up on Long Island.) He mimics people uncontrollably. When he has a Japanese visitor—in Japan his desserts are regarded as works of art—he drops articles and genuflects wildly: "You are big help me, thank you, thank you, thank you," he'll say, bowing over and over again. He is also insistently, self-consciously courteous—a philosophical position.

He tried to explain it to me as he prepared an element in a dessert called Voyage to India. Most of Goldfarb's desserts start with an idea rather than a flavor; this one was meant to evoke the jumbly subcontinental associations of Jackson

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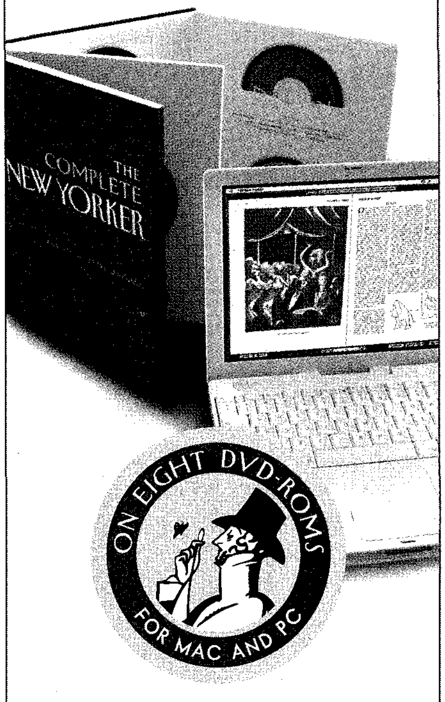

View an online demonstration at archive.newyorker.com.
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Heights, in Queens, where Goldfarb lives. He wiped the plate with vodka—to give it a non-streaky sheen—then combined two items: coconut cream and dried coconut milk. That was the dessert. There was no sugar, for instance. The cream was a puree of the coconut fruit, mixed with lecithin, an ingredient used in industrial peanut butter (it makes it stiffer) and popularized by Ferran Adrià (it's the secret of foam). Mixed with the dried coconut milk, this (now) bouncy puree was rather a wonderful thing in the mouth, an exercise in opposites: light and heavy, dry and wet. It seemed gimmicky—not a whole lot of skill was on display—except that it was a gimmick I'd never experienced before.

Goldfarb was wearing the same shredded T-shirt he usually wore during the day, stretched, saggy, once white, now yellow, which had rotted and was falling apart around the armpits. He had just cleaned the toilet—he insisted that everyone there knew they had to clean it—and also the air-conditioning vents and the corners of the floorboards. The essential mentality of the pastry kitchen, Goldfarb explained, was to regard every item in your life as equally urgent—no one thing should be more pressing than any other—and therefore nothing was ever neglected. You were on call, always.

I thought I understood. That evening, I shook his hand as I was leaving and waved to the others near the sink. Goldfarb sat up stiffly and ordered me back. "Before you are allowed to depart, you must shake and say goodbye to everyone here by name. In a pastry kitchen everything and everyone matters the same." The next day, I had lessons in how to fold a towel as Goldfarb stood by judging my effort. "You can never overestimate the importance of a correctly folded towel." By way of illustration, he added, "Thomas Keller"—the high-minded chef of Per Se and the French Laundry—"loves my towels. He understands." I continued folding. Goldfarb continued watching. "I've fired people for not knowing how to fold a towel." He adjusted my cutting board so that it was precisely parallel. "In a pastry kitchen everything is controlled. A decimal point too much or too little of a gelling agent is the difference between inedible and good. Pastry chefs live on a different planet from the rest of humanity. Welcome to our world."

By three o'clock, a member of the rest of humanity phoned. Craigslist had come through, and Goldfarb had found a bartender, Nina, from Sheepshead Bay. She appeared at five o'clock, an hour before service started—wavy dark hair, a blouse with top buttons not quite buttoned, an abundance of dangly jewelry—but she was rapidly overwhelmed by the drinks list.

"Pretend I'm a customer," Goldfarb told her just before six, after she'd spent her first thirty minutes studying up for the evening's performance, "and I want to know what the Sauternes is like."

"What's that?"

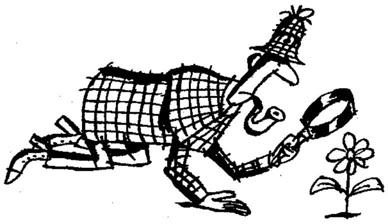
"This," Goldfarb said, and indicated a bottle.

"Oh, that. I wondered how you pronounced it. That's the stinky one, isn't it?"

Goldfarb's head fell into his hands. "Please, try not to describe the wine as stinky."

Goldfarb discovered his mission at El Bulli. By then, he'd done college (Duke, history), cooking school (Le Cordon Bleu), and his apprenticeships (Paris, Florence), and, accepted as a member of Europe's most "cutting edge" three-star kitchen, he was in a place that asked of him exactly what he wanted to give: an uncompromising monkish dedication. El Bulli was in the mountains, removed from the temptations of the city: no company except chefs, no social life, no movies or television, no distractions, living quarters like military barracks, and brutal hours. "We got five to six hours of sleep a week." (Goldfarb, I realized, didn't have to make desserts. His vocation could have been anything—religion, political activism, the military, even stocks and bonds—provided it was a vocation in its fullest sense: a calling of high seriousness.)

"El Bulli is the most radical restaurant in the world, and the engine is the pastry kitchen," Goldfarb explained. "That was the lab—the experiments in technique, in taste combinations." The operating principle was the question "What if?" A custard has always been made with milk. What if it's made with cream? (The result is drier and richer.) A chocolate mousse has always been served cold. What if we warm it? (You taste more.) Tomatoes are always gutted. What if we make a dessert from the seeds? (You get an intensified expression of the fruit.) What if we use chemical compounds? Industrial gelling agents? What if? What if? What if?



Goldfarb became a culinary evangelist. He formed a society of like-minded chefs ("nothing less than the most forward-thinking individuals in modern civilization"). He wrote manifestos. He held meetings—on the Internet, in mountain retreats, in foreign kitchens. He was opinionated and short-tempered and impatient. He was seen to be arrogant, a freak, a genius. He interviewed for jobs, put on pastry displays, dazzled with his technical gifts, was hired, and then let loose. At Cap Juluca, on the Caribbean island of Anguilla, he pickled apricots, made reductions from Coca-Cola, and conceived of a tobacco sabayon. (He was fired after three months, and lived in an island shack, committed to a long period of self-reflection.) At Aquavit, in New York, he made desserts with Chinese spices, curries, and black olives. (He was fired after one month.) In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, he opened Papillon, with Chef Paul Liebrandt, blocks from where the World Trade Center had stood, and, with what seems like an anarchic disregard for the historical moment, produced an interactive Futurist menu that included a starter served on silk and sandpaper, a dish that required the customer to be blindfolded and bound, and a dessert that a waiter injected with a syringe of hot oil at the table.

"Why?" I asked Goldfarb.

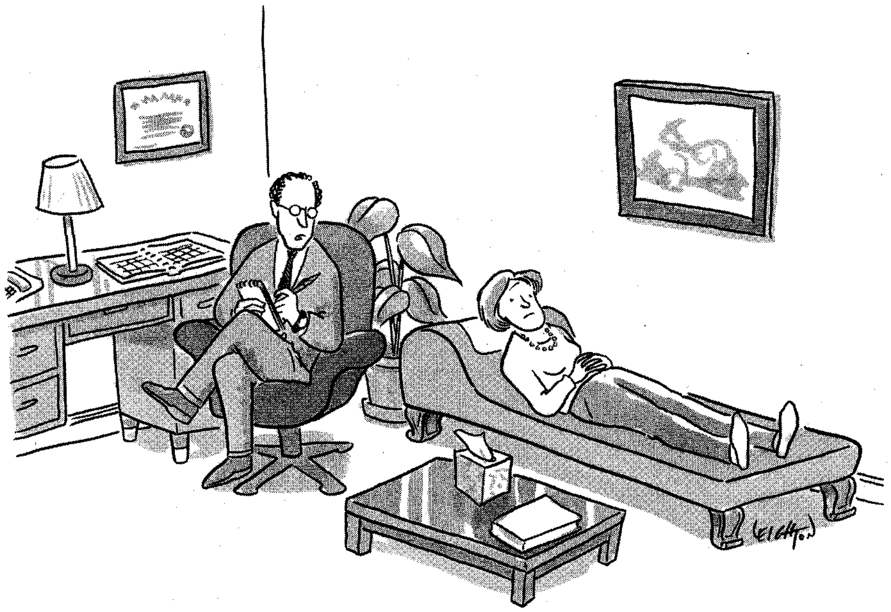
"To change the concept of the eating experience of dessert."

"What was wrong with the old one?"

"What," he replied, "is wrong with change?" (He was fired after five months. He went to Maine, lived in a trailer, worked at an inn, relearned the basics: muffins, apple pie, chocolate-chip cookies.)

In the spring of 2004, he was hired to

run the pastry kitchen at Cru, a new restaurant near Washington Square, with an ambitious young chef, Shea Gallante, a sixty-five-thousand-bottle wine cellar, and a supportive and enthusiastic owner, Roy Welland. By now, Goldfarb had learned caution, and he expressed it in aggressively recalcitrant offerings (vanilla ice cream, chocolate parfait, almond tea cake), until Welland, distressed by the banality of the menu, urged him to be adventurous. "Be yourself," Goldfarb recalls being told. "No, you don't want myself," he replied. "Please wait until you get your reviews. Don't let me loose." The reviews appeared in October. The critics loved the restaurant; they hated the "smart-alecky, flavor-conflicted" desserts, which included the interactive St. Barts May 2001, a peculiar evocation of a Goldfarb seaside holiday, complete with a beach towel and a spray can of salt water. "I was crucified," Goldfarb recalled. (He earned the *Post's* distinction of being among the city's worst culinary events of the year.) "I was thrashed. I was beaten up. The critics went after me with a venom I have never seen in my life. I had to leave New York. I thought, I will never cook here again." He moved to Long Island and became a private cook. ("Good money, bad life—I will never again work for someone who keeps loaded guns at home.") Last October, he saw an item on Craigslist: two investors were looking for a "motivated pastry chef" to start a new dessert bar. Hired and made a partner, he returned to the city.



"If you're happy and you know it, stick with your dosage."

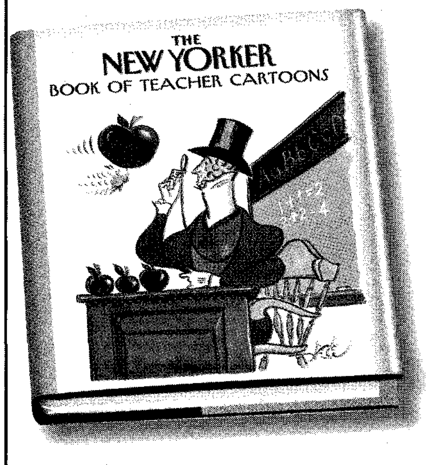
On my next day in the prep area, I was assigned the task of cutting up tomatoes, except that, according to Goldfarb, I wasn't cutting them. "This isn't a rustic Italian restaurant," he said. (That was a refrain; in Goldfarb's eyes, New Yorkers want to eat only pasta.) "You are in a pastry kitchen. You are to sharpen your knife before you begin—on a whetstone, one side only, gently, with pressure but no pressure, twenty times in this direction, twelve times in the other." He paused. "And your posture!" he went on, unable to contain his exasperation. "How can you cut straight when you're not straight? And your back, please—it should be erect. Your arm loose, yes, but at your side, barely moving. You should be like a machine." He examined my tomato cubes. "These haven't been sliced. These have been *mauled.*" He sighed. "Remember, you are on another planet."

He summoned me to the bar for instruction. He wanted me to understand the modern dessert. He began with a book about Fernand Point, which he pulled off a small shelf by the bathroom. Point, Goldfarb explained, was the most influential force in French cooking in the twentieth century. He was the chef and proprietor of the Restaurant de la Pyramide, in Vienne, in the northern Rhône, from 1923 until his death, in 1955. "Fifteen years later, in 1969, seven of the eighteen chefs honored with three Michelin stars had been trained in Point's kitchen." According to the book's introduction, written by Joseph Wechsberg (whose 1949 Profile in this magazine introduced the great man to American readers), Point's gift was an ability to gather up a hundred and fifty years of French cooking—especially the preparations of the two great nineteenth-century masters, Antonin Carême and Auguste Escoffier—and synthesize it into a coherent cuisine. The result was Point's menu, which everyone today would recognize as unequivocally French, particularly the desserts (displayed on another Point flourish, the dessert cart). Chocolate mousse, fruit tarts, soufflés, madeleines, *île flottante* (floating island), sabayon, Bavarian cream, crêpes Suzette, crème brûlée, clafoutis: they're all there.

Goldfarb pulled other books from the shelf. Jacques Maximin (representing the nineteen-seventies), Frédy Girardet (the eighties), Joël Robuchon (the nineties), culminating in "La Pâtisserie de Pierre Hermé." Flicking through each volume, you could see shifts in presentation and flair, but, according to Goldfarb, the influence of Fernand Point was evident on virtually every page. "In eighty years—nearly an entire century—French pastry has changed not at all," he said. And then, muttering to himself, his anger mounting, he fixated on one of the recipes, whatever he was finding in it becoming more and more injurious—to his pride, to his profession, to his calling as a pastry chef. "This is unbelievable. This is fucking unbelievable. There's even a floating island! Can you believe that serious French chefs at the beginning of the twenty-first century are still making floating islands?" He studied a picture of the offending dish, unable to disguise his indignation: the slothfulness of it, the vulgarity.

Goldfarb's idea of dessert was pretty high-church. Mine, in contrast, was outright Baptist, and originated not in the northern Rhône, or in the mountains above Barcelona, but on the arid plains of West Texas, where, on a three-day drive from Louisiana (where my family came from) to California (where we were mov-

Straight-A Humor



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ing), my father, after a coded exchange with my mother, stopped at a place he promised was related to royalty (a Dairy Queen) and introduced my sister and me to the banana split. I brainlessly devoured mine with ice-cream-headachy speed, my pleasure, and my enduring memory of it (including an image of my father grinning broadly from the front seat while he ate his), marred marginally by the fact that, ten minutes later, I was throwing up out of a moving car window. I’d like to believe that I’ve grown more sophisticated in my appetites, but recently, on coming upon a seminal text from my childhood—the 1957 edition of “Betty Crocker’s Cook Book for Boys and Girls”—I realized that, even today, I would find it hard to resist an Eskimo Igloo Cake. (The recipe is on page 14, in the general vicinity of Whiz Choco-Nut Crinkles and Wheaties Ting-a-Lings.)

Dessert is a modern concept. Chaucer didn’t eat one. Neither did Shakespeare. Even as late as the sixteen-sixties, in the diaries of Samuel Pepys, and nearly two centuries after Columbus returned with the first parcel of New World sugar, you can read about brown ale, boiled beef, and exotic cheeses, but there won’t be a single mention of chocolate cake. Desserts didn’t figure in the Native American diet, or among the Aztecs. It is a European invention. The word itself is French (from *desservir: de- + servir*—that is, the thing served after all the plates have been removed). It originally described a course that was mainly fruit, nuts, sweetened meats—in effect, finger food: a way of not having to say good night. The French word appeared in print in 1539, and entered the English language slowly; its first usage was in a seventeenth-century medical text, in a telling and prophetic expression of protest: “Such eating, which the French call desert, is unnaturall.” You can then follow its rapid, unnaturall evolution in early recipes: from finger food to entertainment (a 1555 confection called Snow, made from sugar, rice flour, milk, and egg whites beaten into a froth—wintry verisimilitude on a plate), from glucose grenade (the 1750 alchemical kitchen experiments of Menon, who was the first to chart the thirteen unique changes in sugar from boiling to caramelization) to art (the castles spun out of sugar and lard by Carême). Somehow, viewed thus, a dessert made to look like a lab experiment doesn’t seem out of place.

But there is another line, which has nothing to do with technique and everything to do with fat, and derives not from the word “dessert” but from “pudding,” signifying that enduring mystery of the English diet, which, traditionally, is nothing more than a boiled sack filled with sweetened lard: suet, usually, flavored with leftover mutton, turnips, bits of dried fruit, stale bread, a glass of stout, some of Grandma’s brandy, orange peel, and a carrot, smooshed all together until they go squish and ferment. (The banana split, it seems to me, is more English pudding than French art.)

Goldfarb, meanwhile, had come to recognize the importance of another element of dessert: the dishwashing afterward. This was because he was now doing it himself. (“You can never overestimate the philosophical significance of a clean plate,” he said chirpily, determined to find the silver lining in a thunderstorm.) One day, there was a dishwasher named Angel. (“The perfect name!”) The next day, there was no Angel. There were continuing difficulties at the bar as well. Nina, on her fourth night, forgot to enter the drink orders into the cash register. Hundreds of dollars in sales went unrecorded.

“Hello, ladies,” Robert called out to two women in boots walking past the door. “Any of you want to be a bartender?”

An idea occurred to me: Why not me? I submitted my proposal to Goldfarb and was disappointed by his response: no. But when no one showed up the next day, he had no choice: Can you start, you know, like, now?

There were three rules. Break nothing. (“Please!”) Make no money mistakes. And let people wait. “A pastry rule,” he added. “Better to be perfect and slow than fast but flawed.”

I was surprised by my ignorance, even in areas where I thought I knew something. “May I ask you a question about the Pinot d’Alsace?” the first customer asked, and I was relieved, believing that this was something I’d be able to answer. “Is it made from Pinot Gris or Pinot Blanc?” I stared at him for a long time—I don’t know why; the knowledge wasn’t going to present itself suddenly—before conceding that I had no idea. (“Next time,” Goldfarb said, “tell him you'll find out.”) I added too much ice to the drinks. I added too little. My first cocktail, some Goldfarb conceit with pages of instructions, took me thirty minutes to make; sweat was pouring down my face when I delivered it up.

Why do people drink these things in the first place? Why ruin alcohol with syrups and sugars? Why not? I could imagine Goldfarb replying, and in fact his cocktails were predictably unpredictable liquid variations of his desserts. Their names were metaphors, or states of mind, like Not Your Mother's St. Tropez (a gin-and-tonic with blood orange—“You can never overestimate the power of freshly squeezed fruit”) or Black and White (a coconut concoction with cocoa-bean alcohol—“All the great bartenders made their own alcohols”). A drink called Mr. Clean used a pine liquor that smelled powerfully of a basketball court.

It was when I seemed finally to be getting it right that I was getting it most wrong. I was on top of all the orders. I was preparing items and watching the length of the whole bar, filled now with about two dozen people. My ignorance, so distressing in the beginning, had receded to insignificance in the face of everyone else's. “What should we order?” six women, co-workers at a bank, asked in unison. The menu baffled them.

“Everyone likes chocolate,” I said. They were relieved and grateful.

“And what should we drink?”

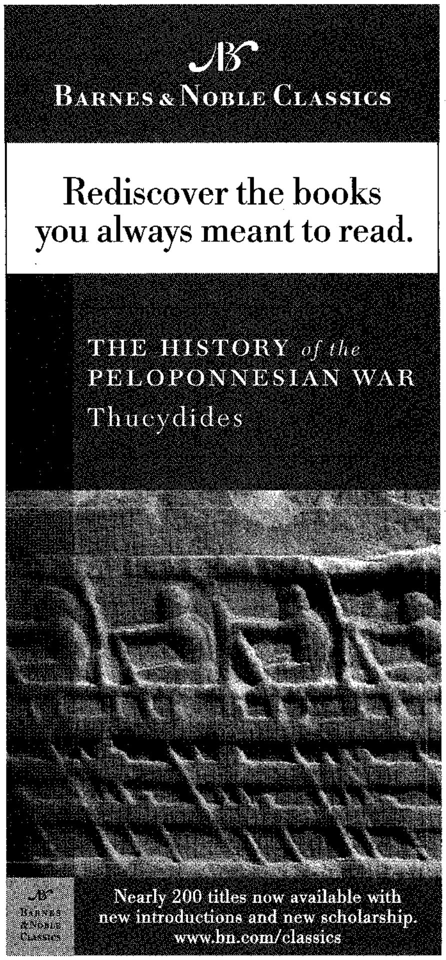
“What doesn't go with champagne?” I felt proud on Goldfarb's behalf that I had increased the value of their order by a ninety-four-dollar bottle.

He took me aside: “You are too frantic. You've got too much adrenaline. You don't understand. There is no fourth wall here. There is no kitchen to hide in. Everything you do is on view. You have to be relaxed. Easy. Listen to the music. You are the atmosphere. Do you understand?” He paused, clearly convinced that I wasn't understanding. He was trying to be polite. “And the advice you keep giving? Do me a favor. Don't.” Ignorance was at the heart of the experience he was trying to create. “Don't tell them what to do. Step back. The idea is dessert.”

“What is this dish called Red?” someone asked.

“Four variations on a color,” I said neutrally. I didn't describe the elements or how they were prepared—how a jello was an unexpected expression of dried hibiscus, the flower having been soaked for twenty hours in water and then reduced to an essence of tropical otherness—or how little sugar was in any of them. (“I hate sugar,” Goldfarb confessed. “But I can't run a restaurant without it. Americans think they need it. It's an addiction. My ideal dessert would have none.”)

Dish after dish arrived. People were perplexed but challenged, teased: things were being put in front of them that they'd never seen before. They tasted them and were surprised: by a flavor or a combination or a texture. I studied the person on each stool. Each was a display of pleasure. Goldfarb, I was starting to see, had found a different purpose in what he was now making. In the beginning, he'd been the angry radical, like one of those postmodern playwrights, provoking his audience, patronizing them, knowing better. But now, back in business (and giving the lie to F. Scott Fitzgerald's lament that in America there are no second acts—the catlike Goldfarb has had nearly nine), he was enjoying the members of that audience. He wanted to make them happy. The desserts were no longer subversive gastronomic experiments. They were also not conventional. But what were they, then? I stepped back again and took in the bar. No one was leaving, even though by now almost everyone had finished eating. Someone asked for another drink. I poured glasses of wine. I made two coffees. An hour later, many people were still there. They were lingering. I understood: the idea was dessert. The need it satisfies is not biological. It is social. In some fundamental way, Goldfarb was now making desserts as traditional as the first plate of sweetmeats and dried fruit at the end of a Renaissance meal: giving people a reason not to say good night. Not just yet. ♦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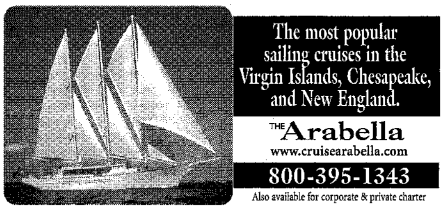
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LETTER FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

REVERSING ROE

Is mainstream right-to-life ready for an abortion ban?

BY CYNTHIA GORNEY

One Friday morning a few weeks ago, a young man named Justin Huck stood in the chilly shade just outside the county administration building in Sioux Falls, watching an older man climb stiffly from a pickup truck in the parking lot. The man was wearing a fleece vest and a National Rifle Association cap, and he walked as though both knees hurt. Huck pulled out one of the three clipboards he had tucked under one arm. "Sir, excuse me," he said. "Would you help us put our state's ban on abortion up for a vote in November?"

The man stopped, studying Huck and his clipboard. "The South Dakota legislature just passed a ban on abortion that makes no exception for the health of the mother, or even for rape or incest," Huck said. "It's pretty extreme. We're trying to put it on the ballot. Let the people vote on it."

The man pushed his cap brim up. "A ban on abortions," he said. "So you can't have one. You got to have the baby, no matter what."

Huck said that was correct. The man was quiet for a moment, and then reached for the clipboard. "I know my wife doesn't agree with that," he said. He signed the petition, printed his address, nodded to Huck, and disappeared inside. A slender young woman with short hair and a snazzy red jacket strode up. Huck made his pitch. "Nope," she said. An old woman, with rheumy eyes and salon-smoothed white curls: "*Yes*," she said sharply, snatching the clipboard from Huck's hand.

A woman in bluejeans and thong sandals hurried by; she started to open the building's front door, but when Huck approached she hesitated. She clasped her hands together. She said, "Oh," in a way that made it seem an unusually thick and complicated word, and she stared at the petition's boldfaced lettering, which begins, "HB 1215: ABORTION—CRIMES AND OFFENSES." I had been in South Dakota for a week by then, driving three hundred and fifty miles from the western side of the state to the eastern, and the grave expression on this woman's face was one I had seen in coffee shops and living rooms and farm-town businesses and the offices of a half-dozen pastors, including two Presbyterian ministers who share the same congregation, admire each other, and argued in strained, low voices as they sat side by side. "It's just that—I do respect life," the woman said to Huck. "But what if the girl was raped by her father, you know? There have to be exceptions. Until you've walked a mile in somebody else's shoes, you never know—but I also think there are a lot of people who need to take more responsibility for their actions—"

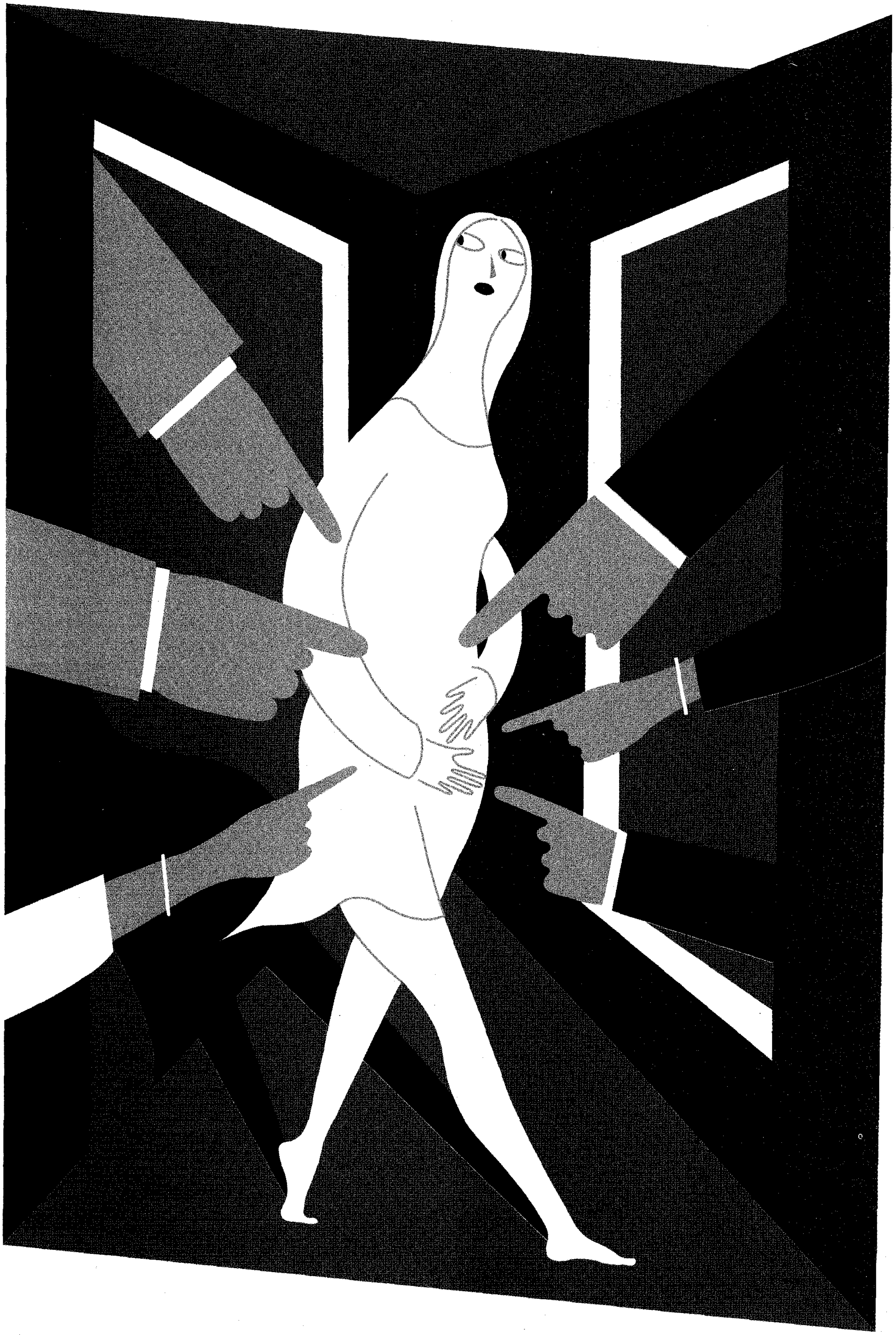
The woman took a deep breath. "Just to let the people vote on it," Huck said evenly, and she signed. After she left, he said that he had been at the University of South Dakota a few days earlier and had instigated an emotional verbal brawl by bringing the petitions into a fraternity house. "Half of them signed and half of them didn't," he said. "But that's one thing I love about this. I was, like, Wow, when I leave they're going to be talking about something besides booze." We looked at his clipboard. He had collected sixteen names in an hour. If by June 19th the petition drive, which began three months ago, proves to have gathered the signatures of at least 16,728 registered voters—more than twice that number have already been collected, and the South Dakota secretary of state's office is completing the verification this week—the November 7th general ballot will ask the state's voters to decide whether "the termination of an unborn human life," as South Dakota House Bill 1215 puts it, should be a felony under state law unless it is undertaken to save a pregnant woman's life.

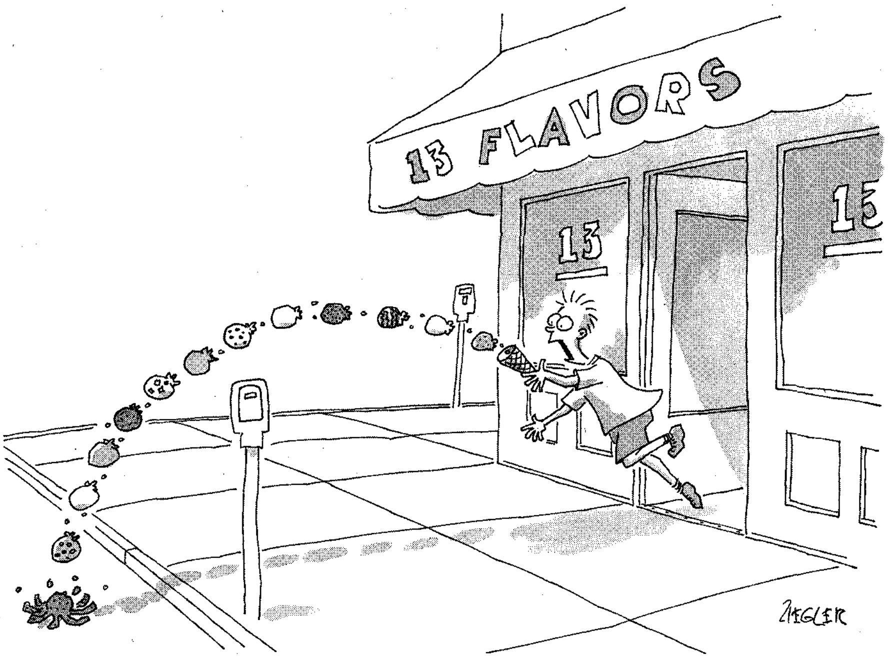
The bill, which was signed into law in March by South Dakota's governor, Mike Rounds, is flagrantly unconstitutional; that was supposed to have been its point. In plain violation of the rules established by Roe v. Wade in 1973, when the Supreme Court declared that abortion is protected by the Constitution and must be legal in every state, the South Dakota law prohibits abortion "throughout the entire embryonic and fetal ages of the unborn child from fertilization to full gestation and childbirth." The legislators who wrote HB 1215, as the law is popularly known in South Dakota, assumed that it would face an immediate legal challenge; that a federal judge would declare it unconstitutional and block its enforcement before the July 1st startup date; and that it would then begin a journey through the appellate system and toward the Supreme Court. "We didn't expect it to go into effect," Bill Napoli, a Republican state senator and one of the law's outspoken defenders, says. "We only wanted to challenge Roe v. Wade."

But South Dakota allows its voters to second-guess their legislature. Under the state's referendum process, people who are unhappy with the results of the annual lawmaking session may circulate petitions to hold almost any new legislation in abeyance until it is voted on in the November general election, when it can be confirmed or killed by a simple majority. The petition drive to put HB 1215 to a public vote was a gamble for the small community of South Dakotans who are willing to identify themselves as strong supporters of legal abortion. The state is religious, conservative, predominantly Republican, and so inhospitable to abortion that when the last resident abortion doctor retired, ten years ago, Planned Parenthood could find no one else to take up the practice, and began flying physicians in once a week from Min-

RICHARD McGUIRE

Seasoned opponents of abortion are dismayed by the South Dakota bill. One said, "Wrong bill. Wrong language. Wrong time."





nesota to the state's only abortion clinic, in Sioux Falls. From Planned Parenthood's point of view, a citizens' vote in November could backfire: if the law is upheld, any subsequent challenge will arrive in federal court accompanied by a formal declaration that in South Dakota, at least, a life-of-the-mother-only ban is what the people really want.

The population of South Dakota is about seven hundred and seventy-five thousand—fewer than the city of Indianapolis—and there has been some cranky local conversation about the prospect of the state's spending taxpayers' money to defend against such a challenge, or soliciting handouts from donors for the emergency "life protection litigation subfund" recently set up by the legislature. "The amount we spend on abortion litigation, if it were spent instead on postnatal care or adoption, would go an awfully long way," said Neil Fulton, a lawyer who works in the state capital, Pierre, and who described himself to me, the first time we met, as a pro-life practicing Catholic. What dismays Fulton most about HB 1215, though, is how profoundly he believes it misjudges the nature of abortion opposition in the United States. "I think South Dakota is going to be a huge, probably hard education for what I would call the hard-line pro-life forces," he said. "A lot of people are going to be surprised at what they do when they have to go into that polling place, where no one's watching. How many of them are pro-life themselves but just won't pull the lever in favor of the law?"

I heard this sentiment expressed many times in South Dakota, more often than not from people who told me that they regard themselves as pro-life. Since the Roe v. Wade ruling, that label has been easy for people to use without specifying what they mean by it; as long as Supreme Court doctrine says that states must keep abortion legal, politicians can slap "pro-life" onto campaign literature without having to work out the fine points of actual laws that might be enforced in their states. But the South Dakota legislature, a hundred and five farmers and teachers and lawyers and retirees who are paid six thousand dollars a year for their public service in Pierre, has now accomplished what in politics is known as calling the question. HB 1215 distills the anti-abortion position to its simplest, most logically coherent essence: full protection, which is right-to-life terminology for no exceptions, short of a pregnant woman's imminent death. And because it will now almost certainly be put to a vote, women and men all over the state are contemplating what full protection, or no exceptions, might look like in practice.

Around the rest of the country, for veterans of abortion opposition, this is not turning out to be an occasion for much celebration. "In our hearts, we're going, Yeah, come on, you guys can do it, but in our heads we're going, This is *not good*," one longtime Midwestern right-to-life lobbyist told me. "Wrong bill. Wrong language. Wrong time. I used to envision the day we ban abortion in our state—people carrying on and crying with happiness and, 'Oh, my gosh, the world has erupted,' and here we were just, like, Ugh. I remember some of the questions: 'Do you think we're going to get any press calls about it?' 'Do we have to respond, or can we just blow them off?' I can't even think of the talking points we'll use. We won't talk about it."

The legislative language that evolved into HB 1215 was first written two and a half years ago, when a young South Dakota state representative named Matt McCaulley decided that he was frustrated by what right-to-life people call the "incremental" approach, by which they mean passing laws that cut back the availability of legal abortions without banning them outright. "Every year, pro-life states like South Dakota passed incremental legislation by wide margins, but it seemed like the number of abortions never went down," McCaulley told me. "Abortion was the law of the land, but we'd never voted for *that*. I was born five months before Roe v. Wade was decided, and this was, like, Look, I'm going to take my duty as a legislator seriously."

The kind of bill McCaulley wanted to write, a flat-out ban that the Supreme Court could not conceivably uphold without reversing Roe v. Wade, has been introduced in statehouses from time to time over the years, and has generally disappeared into subcommittee purgatory without attracting much attention. But McCaulley worked his bill assiduously, enlisting help in Pierre and from conservative national legal experts, including the Thomas More Law Center, a Michigan-based nonprofit that specializes in what its promotional material calls "the religious freedom of Christians, time-honored family values, and the sanctity of human life." He got no support from the National Right to Life Committee, the largest and most well established of the American anti-abortion organizations, or from Americans United for Life, a law firm in Chicago that frequently assists state politicians with abortion legislation. Both groups, in fact, actively opposed McCaulley's efforts, with A.U.L. arguing that it was foolish and potentially damaging to send such a direct challenge toward a Supreme Court whose previous abortion votes made it obvious that the Justices would strike down the law—either directly or by refusing to consider it—and thereby reconfirm Roe v. Wade. (To this day, a reader searching the A.U.L. Web site for triumphant headlines about the South Dakota ban will find only an oblique swipe: a 2004 article, by the A.U.L.'s attorney Clarke D. Forsythe, describing state abortion bans as "premature," "ill-conceived," and "dead on arrival.") McCaulley's legislation passed anyway, in the spring of 2004, but it was vetoed by Governor Rounds, who said that he had technical objections to the language though he supported it in principle.

Then, last year, Rounds and the legislature named seventeen South Dakotans to a Task Force to Study Abortion. McCaulley, who had left office by then, was not named to the task force, but Roger Hunt, another energetic right-to-life Republican, who served in McCaulley's district, was. The group began holding meetings and inviting public testimony in Pierre, and although a few of its members had been selected because they were advocates of legal abortion, it soon became evident that the task force was on its way to producing a compendium of the arguments the American right-to-life movement currently favors most: that legalizing abortion has harmed more women than it has helped; that new scientific advances prove incontrovertibly that human life begins at conception; and that Roe v. Wade requires reconsideration not simply because the Justices were wrong in 1973 but also because this information about harm to women and when life begins wasn't yet available to them.

The atmosphere at the task-force meetings grew increasingly fractious. A right-to-life legal organization in Texas, the Justice Foundation, provided some two thousand affidavits from women who said that they regretted their abortions and were sorry the option had ever been presented to them; the Texas lawyers had gathered the affidavits for litigation purposes, but copies of the three bound volumes have shown up in a few state legislatures recently, and in Pierre they were duly entered into the documentary record. Women came to testify, and wept at the microphone as they described lingering feelings of grief, or guilt, or the permanently empty place at the family table. A couple of women testified that they were certain having an abortion had been the right decision for them. "The God of my understanding knows that I am a woman who knows when and when not to bring potential life into being," a sixty-eight-year-old grandmother from Sioux Falls said. But those accounts were not mentioned in the task force's final report, which poses a variety of policy and informational questions about abortion, and then answers them unequivocally. (Question: "Whether there is any interest of the state or the mother or the child which would justify changing the laws relative to abortion." Response: Yes. "It is now clear that the mother's unborn child is a whole human being throughout gestation and that she has an existing relationship with her child.")

The day the final report was presented, at the task force's closing meeting, in December, the four pro-choice members walked out in protest, objecting that they had been offered no chance to include dissenting views or in any manner disrupt what appeared to them a perfect loop of governmental self-reference: politicians want official findings upon which to base their legislation, so they appoint a state task force, which produces precisely the findings that the legislation requires. "Looking back now, I can see that it had a somewhat predetermined outcome," Marty Allison, the task-force chair, a Pierre pediatrician who describes herself as pro-life, told me. "We were supposed to be just a fact-gathering group. But what actually got turned in is subjective, and has personal opinion in it. There's quite a bit of misleading or false information in there."

Roger Hunt—who has consistently defended the integrity of the task-force process—introduced HB 1215 in January. The bill had a formal name, the Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act, and when national reporters began descending on South Dakota (soon they were coming from Europe, too, and Australia and Japan), HB 1215's supporters spent a fair amount of time working to explain how legislation prohibiting abortion under every circumstance except imminent death could be understood as a means of protecting women's health. The most memorable exposition in this regard was delivered in March by the state senator Bill Napoli, who has a reputation for the colorful quote; one newsman described him to me, with some affection, as "our shotgun mouth." Napoli had been asked by a PBS reporter for "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer" to clarify his assertion that there were ways to interpret HB 1215's life-of-the-mother-only language that would allow abortion for a pregnant woman who was not, strictly speaking, in immediate danger of dying. "They kept hitting me pretty hard, saying, 'Give me an example,'" Napoli told me. "And it got a little testy, so I said, 'O.K.'" At that point, Napoli said, into the PBS camera, "A real-life description to me would be a rape victim, brutally raped, savaged. The girl was a virgin. She was religious. She planned on saving her virginity until she was married. She was brutalized and raped, sodomized as bad as you can possibly make it, and is impregnated. I mean, that girl could be so messed up, physically and psychologically, that carrying that child could very well threaten her life."

Napoli's remark was seized upon by bloggers, and Stephanie McMillan, a Florida cartoonist, drew a comic strip in which a pigtailed girl, deliberating between salad-dressing possibilities, announces that she's going to call Bill Napoli, because he apparently believes women can't make their own decisions. ("Hello Bill? Roasted pepper vinaigrette or honey mustard?") McMillan wrote into her strip's speech balloons the telephone numbers of both Napoli's home and his business, a Rapid City lot that displays and sells old American cars. After McMillan posted the strip on her Web site, Napoli received approximately seven hundred telephone calls, including two death threats and various requests for advice on panty color and managing heavy menstrual periods; in April, McMillan auctioned the original strip on eBay for $2,201. "Look, I sat down and searched my soul on that bill," Napoli said. He seemed to have come to terms with the fact that a lot of literate people in his state now use his name and "sodomized virgin" in the same sentence. "I have always been a rape-and-incest-exception guy, but that's not the hand I was dealt. I looked at that bill from the legal standpoint, and tried to divorce my own personal feelings. We're going to challenge Roe v. Wade, and *then* we're going to sit down and talk about abortion."

The Missouri River cleaves South Dakota into two distinct territories, known locally as East River and West River. East River is farming country; West River has ranches and mines. Both are politically conservative, but West River is known as a more libertarian place, ill-disposed toward government interference in any form. (It was in the West River town of Sturgis, one petition volunteer told me, that a man marched up to her on the post-office steps and said heartily, as he signed, "Good for you for doing this. I hope Bill Napoli has a daughter who gets raped by a nigger.") West River's closest approximation of an urban area is Rapid City, a conglomeration of parks and businesses and nice old houses near Mt. Rushmore, at the base of the Black Hills. The mayor of Rapid City from 2001 to 2003, a fifty-one-year-old Republican businessman named Jerry Munson, is the son of the best-known illegal-abortion doctor in the northern Plains states.

Munson's father, Ben, was an obstetrician who began performing abortions in Rapid City during the late nineteen-sixties, when South Dakota law prohibited them except to save the woman's life. During those years, a national underground counselling-and-referral network, operated by ministers, helped direct women to safe abortions. Dr. Munson had a reputation as a reliable doctor, and the network sent women to him from all over the region. Between Roe v. Wade and his retirement, in 1986, he ran his practice legally, from the same small shingle-roofed building that he had occupied during the illegal days; it now houses a gift shop. While I was in Rapid City, I met Jerry Munson in a restaurant, and after we had talked for several hours I asked him to show me where his father had worked. He gave me an odd look, but said that he would. We drove down some commercial streets, past a Burger King and a Days Inn, and into a deserted parking lot. The gift shop was shuttered, with two trash bins pushed up against an outside wall. It looked as plain as a storage shed. "Tiny little space, yep," Munson said. "They used to picket him right on this sidewalk. He'd bring out a card table for them, with a couple of pitchers of juice, and some doughnuts."

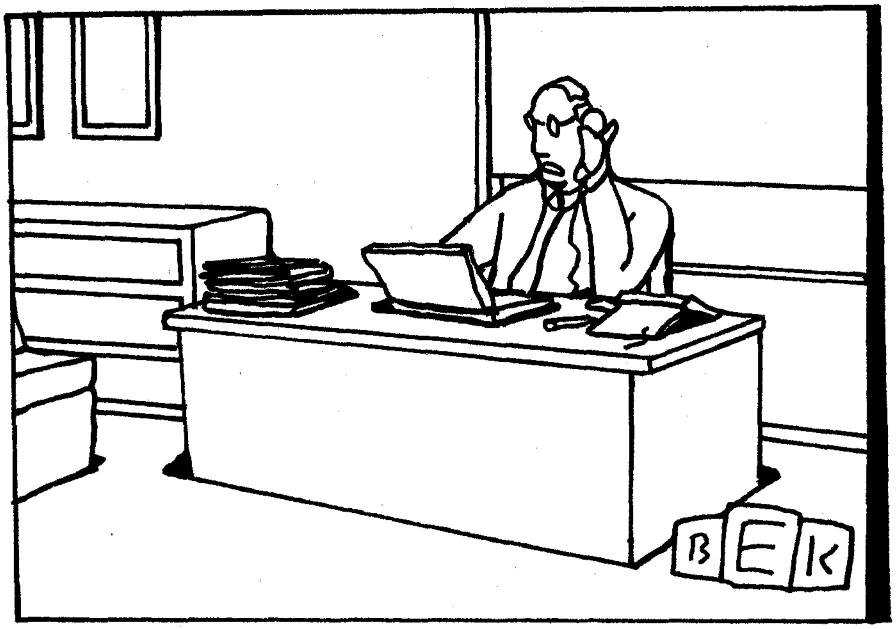
When Munson was thirteen, a boy in his junior high school walked past him in the hallway and said loudly, "There goes the baby killer's son." This was not long after Dr. Munson had informed his son that he was doing something for which he could be arrested and imprisoned. "He told me that he was performing abortions, because an elderly woman who had been doing them in a clandestine way in Rapid City had gone blind, and that he felt compelled to . . . to take over, I guess," Munson said. "To provide the service." His enunciation was edgy; other people in town had told me that Munson is a strong right-to-lifer, but he had already signed an HB 1215 petition, and he plans to vote against the law in November. "Let me say this, so it's real clear—I loved my dad," Munson said. "But the right-to-life people—I've listened to what they say, and they're not wrong about a lot of stuff. If you're going to be fair, you can't just say, 'They're zealots, they don't understand.' This really mushy definition of when it's a fetus and when it's a baby? My dad always talked about 'personhood,' sort of dovetailing with some religions' arguments, I think, that it's a baby when it draws first breath. But when you have photographic, gestational data that shows what a fetus looks like, you start noticing that it's not a zygote. At some point, it's a human being."

If South Dakota had approved a less sweeping form of abortion ban, Munson told me, it is unlikely that he would have signed a petition to reconsider the legislature's work. He also said that he plans to re-register as an Independent, because he thinks the Republican Party has been captured by fanatics. "This country is in deep shit," he said glumly. "The United States is in trouble financially, and in many other ways, and people want these problems solved, and when you start coming into their bedrooms because people like Bill Napoli want to make a name for themselves—coming into their *bedrooms*, even if someone has been *raped*—you really strip our ability to deal with these massive issues."

The drive from Rapid City to Sioux Falls takes five hours, and as I started east I passed a mobile-home park, and a sign that said, "I am the Good Shepherd," and then a ranch house with some black cows nearby, and then nothing but open grassland under a cloudy sky. Once in a while, a small, disconsolate marker would indicate a town somewhere down the end of a side road. I stopped in Wall, population eight hundred and eighteen, where summer vacationers break up their cross-state travels at an old drugstore that's been expanded to a block-long warren of shops and amusements. One of the owners, a fifty-five-year-old South Dakota native named Ted Hustead, gave me a piece of blueberry pie and told me that he thinks the legislature has done a profoundly ill-advised thing. "If they had kept rape and incest abortions in this bill, it probably would have been a little—well, palatable for a lot more people," Hustead said. "I'm probably going to vote to repeal it."

Hustead asked his secretary to print out a few of the incendiary e-mails he has received since March, most of them from out-of-state people indicating that they liked his store but now plan to avoid South Dakota at all costs. If she had any trouble locating the most vehement of these messages, he suggested, she might want to enter the search words "coat hanger." "I'm Catholic, so I'm pro-life," Hustead said. "I'm a Republican, too. But I think my personal beliefs would not necessarily make good law."

I drove east. The clouds closed in, and as it began to rain I thought about the no-exceptions problem, and the way Ted Hustead had stared at the ceiling, his hands folded in his lap, when I asked him how he intended to vote. The no-exceptions problem has been a source of intense strategic and philosophical division among right-to-life advocates since American states first began reconsidering their felony-abortion laws. Americans under forty tend to assume that the concept of legal abortion sprang into being with the Roe v. Wade ruling, in January, 1973. But, for ten years before that, state legislatures had been studying statutory abortion language



"I'll take care of it impersonally."

inspired by something called the Model Penal Code, a set of sample laws compiled by a group of legal scholars interested in modernizing all the states' criminal statutes. The Model Penal Code's abortion section was written principally by a University of Pennsylvania law professor, Louis B. Schwartz, who understood the magnitude of the conceptual change he was proposing: instead of keeping abortion a felony unless the mother's life was in danger, which is how nearly all the old criminal abortion laws read, Schwartz's model statute rendered abortion "justifiable"—legally permissible—for rape or incest, fetal deformity, and the woman's physical or mental health. These categories had been quietly used by doctors for years; it was common knowledge in American hospitals that there were physicians who could occasionally be persuaded to perform abortions that were labelled "therapeutic" but might well have been deemed illegal if anyone had decided to prosecute. Schwartz recast into legislative language three of the most familiar of these therapeutic-abortion reasons (he left out "patient is wealthy and has highly placed hospital connections"). And that was the first formal framing, for purposes of a public conversation, of what everybody now thinks of as the big exceptions.

Right-to-lifers have been arguing about them ever since—not about whether they're morally acceptable, in strict right-to-life terms. They're not. The fight is over what to do about *other* people and the big exceptions. Legislative proposals based on Schwartz's abortion language set off battles in statehouses across the country; Colorado was the first state to change its law, in 1967, followed by North Carolina and California. A very few states, like New York and Hawaii, ended up dispensing with the idea of exceptions categories, adopting laws that essentially declared that up to a certain point in pregnancy a woman's reason for seeking an abortion was nobody else's business. But by the end of 1972, when about a fourth of the states had remade their old felony statutes, most had implemented some version of the Model Penal Code law. What is now widely referred to as Roe v. Wade is the Supreme Court's adjudication of two abortion cases, not one: Mary Doe v. Arthur Bolton, which challenged the Model Penal Code law that had recently been adopted in Georgia; and Jane Roe v. Henry Wade, which challenged the old life-of-the-mother-only law in Texas.

By a majority of seven to two, in two consecutive rulings, the Justices found both kinds of laws unconstitutional. It wasn't simply that states could no longer prohibit abortion, the way Texas had; they also could no longer legalize abortion in the way Georgia had, making it lawful only for women who had gone through white-coat inquiries as to whether their circumstances were serious enough to justify terminating a pregnancy. The impact of the dual decisions was enormous, and instantly coalesced what had been a poorly organized array of state anti-abortion groups into a national movement with a paramount agenda item: Undo Roe. Inside the movement, though, a passionate debate was under way: How? And *then* what?

The Model Penal Code proposals had already begun separating the purists from the pragmatists. At the center of the conflict was the information that has been reinforced in every serious poll on the subject of abortion: by overwhelming majorities, Americans want abortion kept legal for victims of rape or incest. By smaller majorities, they usually want abortion legal in cases of fetal deformity, too, and to protect the pregnant woman's health. "Abortion for convenience," a phrase I heard repeatedly from South Dakotans as they explained what they think should not be legal, is a kind of code in this country; its real meaning is "The woman's reasons aren't adequate," or, less curtly, "I want a say in what those reasons are." In many of the presumptively abortion-hostile states—that excludes New York, California, and the two dozen or so others that would keep abortion readily available if Roe were overturned—what many people seem to think they want as a working abortion law is some updated version of the Model Penal Code: abortions restricted by statute to those situations in which the voting majority agrees that they're warranted.

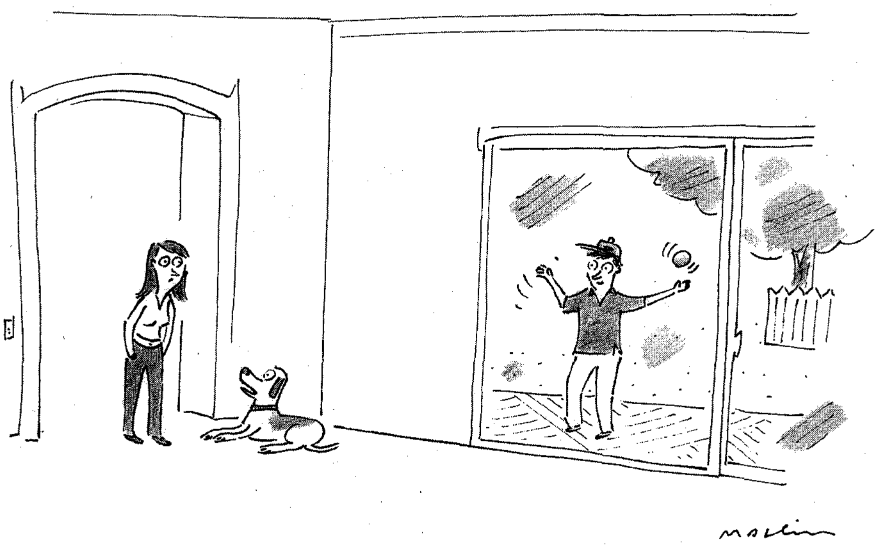
For anyone who has made the complete immersion into right-to-life thinking, a law like that is the equivalent of one that makes slavery legal only for those who really need slaves. The abolitionist analogy goes back a long way among abortion opponents. In their books and newsletters, right-to-lifers often observe that black slaves were full human beings even when most whites and the American courts did not yet see them that way. The same thing holds true for human life from conception on, they tell one another: the unborn are children, not "potential" children, whether the majority agrees or not. This is the foundational right-to-life premise. It is also why the only form of abortion law that makes real internal sense, for a dedicated right-to-lifer, is one with no exceptions categories at all. If the premise is to remain intact, a person who professes to be pro-life but insists on a rape-and-incest exception (which covers most pro-life politicians in this country, including President Bush) is saying one of two things: either it *is* justifiable to kill children in some circumstances, or what grows in a woman's uterus is a child if the woman had sex voluntarily but not if she was forced into it.

Neither of those options is plausible, under most people's sense of logic and morality. (I did listen to one South Dakota right-to-life pastor struggle to figure out how Scripture might justify redefining a rape-and-incest pregnancy as something other than a child. "The Bible seems to indicate that some things are so evil that the whole action has to be expunged," he mused. But he didn't sound convinced.) So here's the dilemma, if the role model is the nineteenth-century anti-slavery activist: how prudent is it to push people who might otherwise be your allies—who might be at least partially helpful to your cause—to examine the inconsistency of their own position? You might win them over to the true-believer ranks: it's a child, so the law can't permit killing it unless that's the unfortunate consequence of trying to save its mother's life. Or you might alienate them so thoroughly that they end up in the enemy camp: abortion has to be legal at least for rape and incest, which means that it isn't a child, which means the foundational premise is wrong, which means abortion is not child-killing after all but, rather, a morally complex act that requires society to weigh one thing against another—the severity of the pregnant woman's distress, for example, versus developing human life. That is exactly the kind of weighing Justice Harry Blackmun engaged in when he wrote the majority opinion in Roe v. Wade.

At the headquarters of the mainstream right-to-life organizations in this country, there is a public reason for continued reticence toward South Dakota's new abortion law: the timing remains problematic for a legal challenge, just as it was in 2004. Even if the new Supreme Court Justices, John G. Roberts, Jr., and Samuel A. Alito, Jr., are ready to overturn Roe and Doe completely, which remains an open question, the present count still appears to be five to four in support of the idea that the Constitution protects a woman's right to abortion. It's very risky, the argument goes, to assume that the votes will have shifted in the other direction during the two to three years that it would take a South Dakota case to reach the Supreme Court.

But the deeper source of right-to-life uneasiness about HB 1215 lies in the ongoing dispute over the tactics of managing Americans' ambivalence about abortion—whether to work at it bit by bit, in an effort to convince voters, politicians, and judges of the merits of laws that close off access to abortion without banning it outright; or whether that saves only some babies' lives, to use the movement's vernacular, while doing violence both to other babies and to the whole philosophical construct of "right to life." From inside this decades-old debate, it's either principled and straightforward or strategically stupid and dangerous to offer up a law like HB 1215 for careful public examination—to ask an entire state's voters, that is, to work through the no-exceptions question for themselves.

In 2004, the most recent year for which South Dakota has full statistics, eight hundred and fourteen abortions were performed in the state. Twenty-three of those, according to information voluntarily provided by the patients, were for pregnancies that resulted from rape or incest. That amounts to less than three per cent; studies on a broader scale indicate that the national ratio is even lower than that. In the coming months, defenders of HB 1215 will undoubtedly point out that few women become pregnant from rape or incest, and that the law permits the dispensing of contraceptives "prior to the time when a pregnancy could be determined"—language that would keep morning-after pills legal for rape victims, since that form of emergency contraception is typically ingested within a few days after intercourse, when pregnancy is not yet detectable. When I was in South Dakota, though, people didn't seem especially interested in either of those arguments. They seemed instead to be grappling with Louis Schwartz's categories, and it was the rape-and-incest provision that appeared to be troubling them most—as though something about this image in particular, the pregnant rape victim being told that she must carry the baby to term, was compelling them to think not about "abortion for convenience," or "abortion for birth control," but, instead, about abortion and emotional anguish in the context of real women they know. "I'm going, What if something happened to one of my best friends, or to me," a Rapid City high-school senior named Kayla Czmowski told me. Kayla said that she was pro-life, or had assumed herself to be, and that she kept reconsidering the excruciating idea of a pregnancy from rape—how such a baby would be sort of half the rapist but also half the woman who was carrying it. Kayla turned eighteen in February; this summer, with some misgivings, she will



"You're the one who wanted a boyfriend—you play with him."

register to vote. "I hate to think about the fact that this is going to be the first thing I vote on," she said. "This is not some abstract candidate. It's your sister, or your daughter. It's your mom."

A year and a half ago, before the November, 2004, elections, the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights made up a "What If *Roe* Fell?" wall chart, color-coding every state according to the likelihood of a ban if the Supreme Court should overturn Roe v. Wade. The calculus is complex, factoring in things like local party politics, existing judicial interpretations of the state's constitution, and whether the state has in place a "trigger law," meaning a statute like the one the Louisiana legislature passed this month, which is unenforceable at present but was written to make abortion illegal immediately following a Roe reversal. Twenty states on the chart are green, signifying "low alert"; the rest are divided between yellow (medium alert) and red. South Dakota—"highly vulnerable to enactment of new ban," the chart reads—is red.

"I've been trying very, very hard for five years to get the rest of the country interested in South Dakota," Sarah Stoesz, the president of the Planned Parenthood affiliate that serves Minnesota and the Dakotas, said to me one morning, as we drove south out of Rapid City in a rental car that she had picked up at the airport. "That's one of the reasons the whole uproar took me by surprise at first this year."

Stoesz is slight and blond, and was wearing black slacks and pointy-toed pumps as she headed down the empty highway. We were on our way to the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux, seventy miles away; the tribal president there, a nurse named Cecilia Fire Thunder, had been telling reporters that if HB 1215 was upheld she intended to open a reproductive-health clinic on the reservation, beyond the reach of South Dakota state law. National news stories followed, and Stephanie McMillan, the cartoonist who drew the strip containing Bill Napoli's telephone numbers, announced that she was splitting her auction proceeds between Planned Parenthood and the Oglala Sioux. At the last minute, Fire Thunder had cancelled her meeting with Stoesz, but Stoesz thought it would be useful to see the reservation anyway, as a kind of last-resort contingency possibility. "I already view South Dakota as a trial run for a post-Roe world," she said.

We had been driving for more than an hour, and the barren reaches of grassland began to speckle with the first indications of reservation presence: some baled hay, the Blacktail Deer Bed & Breakfast, a half-dozen cars beside a mobile home on blocks. Soon we pulled into Pine Ridge. The reservation's health center was on the other side of town, on a low rise, and as Stoesz parked out front she raised her eyebrows in surprise; it was an attractive stone building, large and airy, with an angled glass portico shielding the entrance. The lobby had high ceilings and teal-colored walls, which were decorated with portraits of Indians and stretched animal skins. For a time, Stoesz stood quietly just inside the front door, her hands clasped behind her back, looking around. "It's beautiful," she said. "This is far nicer than our clinic. *Far* nicer. Our windows can't be this big, for security reasons, so we have less natural light. I love the feel of this."

The day I had visited South Dakota's Planned Parenthood clinic, in Sioux Falls, its sole exterior ornamentation was a defiant pink banner, stretching the length of the street-side wall, that read, "THESE DOORS WILL STAY OPEN!" Otherwise, the building looked like a bunker, its windows narrow and tinted, a corner-mounted surveillance camera sweeping steadily back and forth. Four physicians now make the regular commute from Minnesota, including the affiliate's medical-services director, who grants interviews only with the assurance that even her first name will not be made public. ("I'm concerned about harassment," she said to me the day I met her. "Both at home and at work.") Regardless of the fortunes of HB 1215, there is no shortage of ways in which the South Dakota legislature can continue to make the provision of legal abortion more difficult within the state; there has been talk of requiring any abortion-providing doctor to obtain local hospital privileges, for example. The medical director has already made inquiries about how she might request those privileges. One of the requirements, she was informed, is local residency. And, even as a remote possibility, the reservation-clinic idea was to recede within a matter of weeks; in early June, the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council voted to suspend Fire Thunder as president and to ban abortion anywhere on the reservation. According to an account in *Indian Country Today* of the crowded meeting at which Fire Thunder was suspended, the ban that the council approved contains no exceptions. "If you were born out of rape or incest," one of the council members said to the crowd, "thank you for being here."

As Stoesz drove us back to Rapid City, I studied the road map, trying to calculate how long it would take a woman from South Dakota to reach the nearest legal clinic if the Sioux Falls Planned Parenthood facility was forced to stop providing abortions. From Rapid City to Denver: seven hours, in clear weather. Sioux Falls to Minneapolis: four hours. Sioux Falls to Sioux City, Iowa, right at the southeastern border: seventy minutes. Stoesz glanced over at me. "People who have broader world experience think, What's the big deal?," she said. "Now imagine that you live in that farmhouse over there."

We had rounded a curve in the gently undulating landscape; a lone house and a barn were visible at the end of a long driveway, a half mile away. "And in the middle of winter?" Stoesz said. "And you've never even been to Sioux Falls before? For someone like that, just coming to Sioux Falls for an abortion procedure is like you or me buying a ticket to Outer Mongolia. It might be easier just to have a baby."

I suggested that this was the desired outcome, from the perspective of Stoesz's opponents. "Well, some of them will have the baby," she said. "And some will self-abort, or try to have an illegal abortion. And some women will end up with babies they don't love, and are ill-equipped to care for. In their simple worlds, girls get pregnant during high school sometimes, it's awful, but there are open, loving adoptive families, it can be a wonderful thing—and that's true, in a perfect world. No one on the pro-choice side is saying we shouldn't encourage that. But how many of the girls in these houses live in that perfect world? I just think that, once women who are loved by pro-life people begin to die, it will change their thinking. But I don't want that to happen, of course. I don't think it's worth the trade." ♦

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

UTOPIA, THE BRONX

Co-op City and its people.

BY IAN FRAZIER

If you take I-95 North through the Bronx heading out of the city, Co-op City will be on your right. Its high-rise apartment buildings stand far enough from one another so that each appears distinct and impressive against the sky. In slow-motion seconds, they pass like the measureless underside of a starship in a science-fiction movie. Drivers who don't live there are soon across the line into Westchester County and thinking of something else. Co-op City is the largest coöperative housing complex in America, possibly in the world. Its residential buildings have more than seventy thousand rooms. No one can say the exact total right offhand. The number of its apartments, however, is as established and immutable as the atomic weight of lead. That number is fifteen thousand three hundred and seventy-two. Co-op City's fifteen thousand three hundred and seventy-two apartments, at full occupancy, house more than sixty thousand people. If Co-op City weren't part of New York City, it would be the tenth-largest municipality in the state.

Co-op City sits mostly on marshland that was filled in—not very successfully, as it turned out—in 1966. Some of its acreage remains tidal flat along the Hutchinson River. At one time, this land and much of the eastern shore of the Bronx was inhabited by the Siwanoy tribe of Indians. Al Shapiro, a retired facilities engineer for the Post Office, who has lived in Co-op City for twenty-seven years and served as president or vice-president of the coöperative's board of directors for ten, says he would like to find some Siwanoy Indians and get them to open a casino at Co-op City. Then, he says, he would bargain for concessions from local gambling moguls like Donald Trump. Al Shapiro is only kidding; the Siwanoy are no more.

They were an Algonquian tribe, of the same linguistic family as the Menominee of Wisconsin, the Chippewa of the Plains, and the Cree of Canada. That fact about the Siwanoy is fairly certain, but others are less so, including whether they were called the Siwanoy and whether they constituted a tribe or something less defined. Indians did live in the Bronx, and historians did call them the Siwanoy; who they were is a question mark today. Archeological studies of village sites in the Bronx show that Indians had been in the area for several hundred years before the coming of the Dutch, in 1614. Middens that the Indians left behind hold evidence of their rich and varied diet—whitetail-deer bones, lobster and crab claws, quahog and mussel and conch shells, elk bones, charred walnuts, hickory shells, and deep, ancient heaps of oyster shells. Pottery found in the middens revealed an improvement in the Siwanoy's skills as potters dating from about 1550, with finely wrought and decorated pots of square-neck design. Historians don't know why the pottery improved. One guess is that new pottery styles were brought to the Siwanoy by women whom they captured, or by captured Siwanoy women who later escaped or were redeemed.

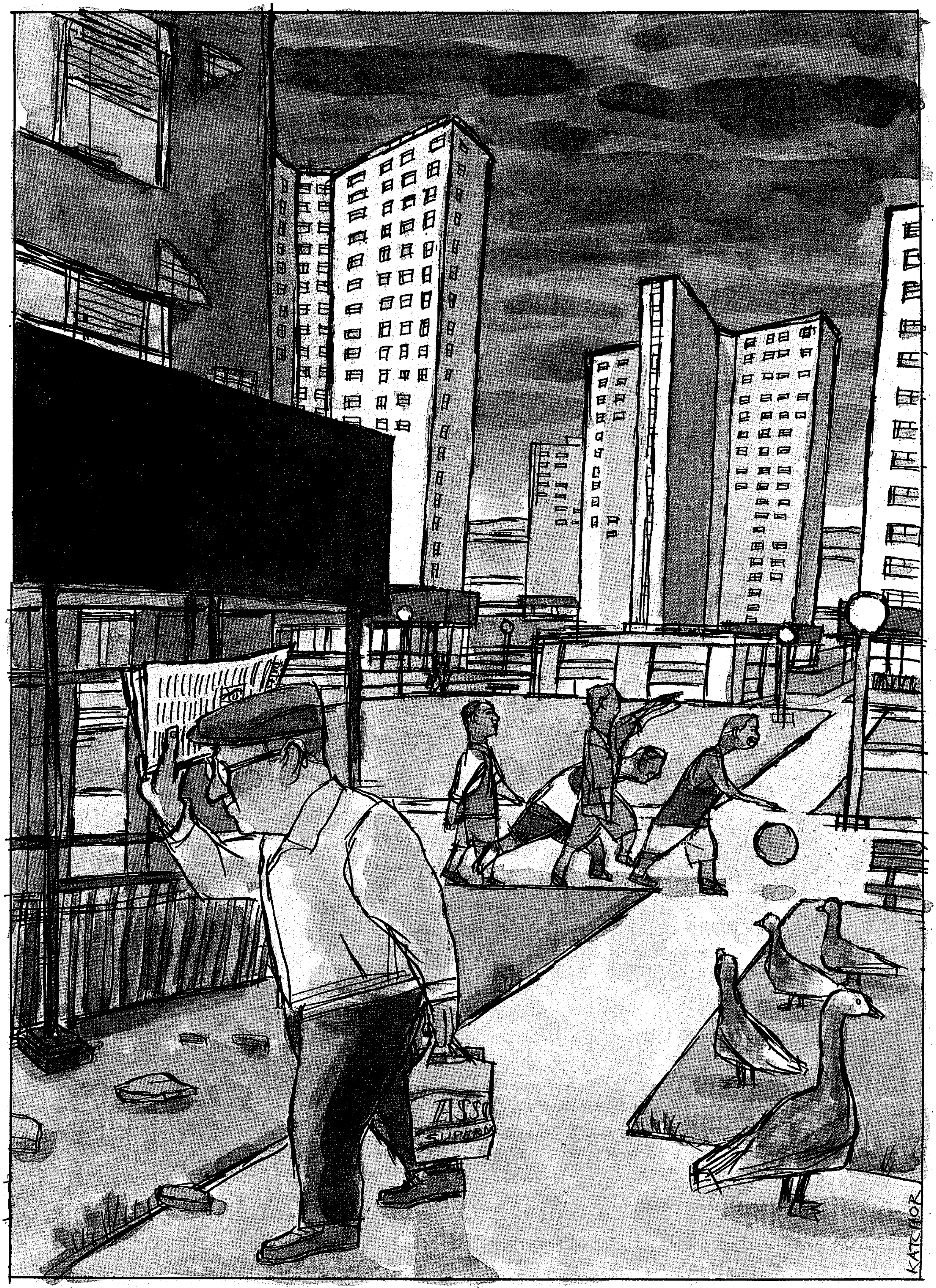
When the land here was swamp, a likely site for a shellfishing camp was on a granite outcropping at the corner of Baychester Avenue and Donizetti Place in Co-op City. Too much trouble to dynamite and cart off, the outcropping is still there, beside the busy intersection, bracketed by two Dumpster pads. A better documented Indian village site is about a five-minute drive south, past Co-op City, at the corner of Schley and Clarence Avenues. A creek, no sign of which now remains, used to come into Eastchester Bay there. Shoreline curving to a point encloses a perfect little cove with high ground above it that keeps nor'easters off your neck. Among the many bays, inlets, and coves that corrugate the eastern edge of the Bronx, the cove at the corner of Schley and Clarence is especially snug. Indians used this site seasonally, when they were collecting shellfish. Some of the shell heaps here were as deep as five feet.

In 1918, an archeologist named Alanson Skinner did a study of this site, digging carefully through the middens and the ground around them. Along with shells, animal bones, and potsherds, he found six human skeletons, including one of an infant. Artifacts like stone gorgets, fishing-net sinkers, and tools for hammering were just lying on the shore. Dug-up objects like lead bullets, bottle glass, gun flints, fragments of white clay trade pipes, and a brass arrowpoint probably cut from the side of a worn-out kettle indicated habitation in the years after trading with the Dutch had begun. In a small cache, Skinner found a collection of periwinkle-shell parts ready to be worked and smoothed into wampum beads.

The ground he excavated is now mostly covered with houses. A jetty extends the point, and on the other side of it somebody is building a marina and condominiums. The house at 3236 Schley Avenue, adjoining the point, has a side yard with a small mound in its lawn—a shell heap, perhaps. I couldn't ask, though, because 3236 appeared to be vacant. A short distance up the street are row houses. I knocked on the door at 3232 Schley, and a woman in a red sweatshirt and short bobbed hair answered. She was talking on a cordless phone and replied to me between sentences spoken into it. I asked if the row houses were new; they were. I asked what had been there before and the woman said, "An empty lot." That an Indian village had once occupied the site was news to her.

The Siwanoy also raised crops, which they planted in scattered plots on higher ground. Animals belonging to the Dutch got into the crops of many local Indians; the Indians naturally killed and ate the animals; ergo, eventually, war. In

BEN KATCHOR


TASSO
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The basic purpose of the largest co-op complex in America was to keep middle-class people from moving to the suburbs.

1640, under a cruel governor, the Dutch started a widespread wiping out of Indians. A Dutch history says that sixteen hundred Indians were massacred on this governor's orders between 1643 and 1644 alone. (An exaggerated estimate, and unfair to the governor, some historians say.) For their part, the Indians descended upon and massacred unprotected settlements of Dutch. A half-hearted treaty in 1643 interrupted the killing, briefly.

Into the middle of this situation came Anne Hutchinson. (She is the Hutchinson of the river that borders Co-op City, and of the parkway.) Anne Hutchinson was a midwife and unofficial explicator of the Bible who, with her husband and children, had sailed to Boston from Lincolnshire, England, in 1634. Anne's father, a radical-tending Puritan minister, had passed on his views to her during the large amounts of time he spent in ecclesiastical disfavor and without a congregation to preach to. Soon after arriving in Boston, Anne got into trouble with the believers who led the Massachusetts Bay Colony for saying, among other heresies, that grace was not only more important than works for salvation but that you could experience grace with no mediation of Church or Bible at all. (Grace, a tricky concept, means God's favor bestowed without one's having to ask for or merit it, like a mother's love for her child.) Anne's opponents feared that, if her ideas about grace took hold, people would just sit around waiting for Heaven, and ignore the Church elders, and be ungovernable.

So the colony's leaders tried, convicted, and banished her. With some of her family and followers, Anne moved to present Rhode Island, where Roger Williams, another freethinking Massachusetts exile, had recently founded Providence. She and her family lived in nearby Portsmouth, which they helped to found; her husband died there. Hearing that Massachusetts might take over Williams's settlements, Anne decided to get away from the English altogether, and received permission from the Dutch to move to New Netherland. In 1642, Anne and seven of her children and eight other people sailed up the (now) Hutchinson River and built a cabin either on the river's Co-op City side or just across from it. Lloyd Ultan, the Bronx Borough Historian, says that her cabin most likely was on land now under the M.T.A. bus garage, just north of Co-op City. Anne's name has been associated with this part of the Bronx ever since. By the late seventeenth century, settlers were referring to land that is now Co-op City as "Hutchinson's."

The Indians did not like the Hutchinson cabin being so close to their planting grounds, and told her to move. Anne didn't; she had never had any problems with Indians, viewed them sympathetically, and opposed their mistreatment. She believed in peace. When Massachusetts and Connecticut all but exterminated the Pequots, in 1636 and 1637, she had spoken out strongly against that war. She would not even allow guns in her house. After the 1643 treaty, the Dutch soon resumed massacring Indians, and by summer the Indians were ready to retaliate against the spread-out settlements, including those in Anne's part of the Bronx. Neighbors warned her that the Indians were coming, but Anne stayed, and one late-summer afternoon a party of warriors came and killed her and almost everybody else on her place. The Indians scalped and mutilated the bodies, killed the animals, and burned down the buildings. No record exists of the bodies ever being given any burial.

Though the Indians killed six of Anne's children, they captured and spared one daughter. Anne's five other children, grown up at the time and living elsewhere, survived as well. Through these offspring, Anne became the ancestress of many notable Americans. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was Anne Hutchinson's seven-greats-grandson, and George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush are her ten-greats- and eleven-greats-grandsons. Both families descend from Edward, her firstborn. Wampage, the Siwanoy chief who is said to have killed Anne Hutchinson by his own hand, afterward changed his name to hers (or an approximation of it). Wampage lived a long time, and in treaties signed in 1654 and 1692 he apparently used the name Anne-hooke. Historians speculated that taking the name of a vanquished enemy was a Siwanoy sign of respect. Unlike Anne, Anne-hooke was buried in a grave that people identified as his. Near the ocean on Eastchester Bay, it was already washing away a hundred-some years ago. A member of the New-York Historical Society noted in 1919 that history does not say what happened to the Siwanoy, "though we learn from the church records that Indians attended the Episcopal church in Westchester as late as 1710, and that they were of good behavior during the services."

A flashy Siwanoy casino probably wouldn't fit with Co-op City's nineteen-sixties utopian design scheme anyway. Following the example of Le Corbusier, the designers of Co-op City combined its utilitarian high-rises with many acres of landscaped green space. This idea is now out of architectural fashion, but I like it. I sometimes wander the curving paths across the lawns, often empty except for a few full-color newspaper-ad pages blowing across them. I rest at an out-of-the-way bench and look at the windows and balconies repeating themselves upward for the high-rises' twenty-four, twenty-six, or thirty-three stories. When the sun comes up (as I know from satellite photos my son finds on the Internet), it throws dramatic, film-noir shadows of the buildings far across the Bronx. From ground level, the sky around the buildings features stacked-up clouds just arrived from the ocean; seagulls creak and wheel among them. At rush hours, helicopters sit motionless over strategic points on I-95, like predator fish waiting for a minnow to tumble from the school. An asphalt path traces the Hutchinson River through the Co-op City grounds, with chain-link fence running alongside. Reeds that grow right up to the shining gray mudflats are black at the waterline, green above that, and reddish-gold at their tapered, waving tops—no different, perhaps, from what the Siwanoy used to walk through.

Grace or works; works or unmediated, self-revealed grace. Anne Hutchinson touched something explosive with that question. The Massachusetts men who banished her later exulted at her bloody end, seeing it as God's confirmation of their judgment. Undeterred, the idea of inward grace as preferable to works came back powerfully after her death and never went away. In fact, the elevation of grace was America's great theological contribution to the world. Publicly, ours became a country of good works; but privately, and really, America became the country of unearned, unmerited, predestined, self-proclaimed, all-you-have-to-do-is-be-you, glorious heavenly (or unheavenly) grace.

By which I mean, the country of cool. Cool is grace in secular form. Either you have grace or you don't; the same with cool. If you have been chosen by grace, everything you do will be suffused by grace. Likewise, if you're cool whatever you do is cool. But cool is even more rigorously exclusive than the strictest kind of grace. Those lacking grace may under some circumstances approach closer to it by sincere intention and an abundance of good works. But, if you're not cool, then, sadly, no amount of trying will make you cool. Indeed, working to become cool will actually make you more uncool. The dead-certain confidence of those who know they have grace, or cool, maddens and fascinates those who don't. Grace, as cool, is America's main export, in its music, movies, and style.

Sometimes in the mornings I ride the No. 5 subway to the Baychester Avenue stop, in the Bronx, and then I walk the half mile or so to Co-op City. (Though convenient subway service has been promised since the development began, that stop, and the Pelham Bay stop on the 6, are still about as close to Co-op City as the subway comes.) On school days, the No. 5 is full of students travelling to Harry S. Truman High School, on the Co-op City grounds. The students get off at Baychester Avenue, go down the stairs from the elevated platform, wait to file through the revolving gate, and continue to school at the lento pace of a church processional. They wear backpacks with pictures of the Tasmanian Devil skateboarding on them; their hair is often styled, sometimes in cornrow patterns as complicated as circuitry. Wearing two hats, with one hat facing forward and the other back, is a look I'd never noticed before. Girlfriends walk linked by the shared earphones of their iPods. Eyes half-lidded, limbs relaxed, and robed in their baggy clothes, the kids exactly personify American-made grace; i.e., cool.

Speeding forward in time, post-Anne Hutchinson: the local Indian wars ended; the Dutch ceded New Netherland to the English (had she lived, Anne wouldn't have escaped her countrymen even here); then the farmable land along the Hutchinson River, and throughout the Bronx, went to farms for almost three hundred years. Land where Co-op City is now was still farmland into the nineteen-fifties. Ken Migliorelli, who has a regular stand in the Union Square farmers' market, remembers that workmen putting I-95 through the northeast Bronx paused to let his father harvest his dandelion crop just across from the present Co-op City before they started to bulldoze. A lot of the Co-op City site, Ken Migliorelli recalls, was more or less squatters' land, where anybody who wanted to could farm. Marshy streams ran through it, some navigable by canoe. Migliorelli now farms upstate, near Tivoli, New York, where the family moved long ago.

In 1960, William Zeckendorf, that day's Donald Trump, and some other investors started an amusement park on two hundred and five acres of the land that Co-op City now occupies. They were trying for an East Coast imitation of California's Disneyland. People who were young in greater New York at the time can sing the jingle from the ad: "Mommy and Daddy, take my hand! Take me out to Freedomland." The park's name echoed the Dutch, who had called this part of the Bronx Vredelandt (Land of Peace). Perhaps inspired by an ambitious spirit endemic to the place, the developers laid out the park in the shape of the United States (the Lower Forty-eight). Freedomland had sections called the Great Chicago Fire, the Old Southwest, the Great Plains, New Orleans, etc. Unfortunately, Freedomland was a pretty ramshackle, mosquitoey place, as well as expensive and hard to get to. In 1964, the New York World's Fair came along to give it competition, and it faltered, tried to reorganize, and filed for bankruptcy. Photos and reminiscences of Freedomland are now the subject of a nostalgic Web site for the middle-aged.

Elsewhere in the Bronx lived immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe whose point of origin in America

"I'm sorry, have you been grimacing long?"

had been the Lower East Side. After getting established there, they had moved into the middle class and uptown. In the Bronx's central and southern reaches, along Morris Avenue and the Grand Concourse, they spent a few fondly remembered decades (neighbors, checkers, stoop ball, Klingshoffer's Delicatessen), until rent control caused the elegant apartment buildings to grow shabby, and poorer and newer immigrants and migrants began moving in. The city, inspired by officials like Robert Moses, decided to change its housing profile in a way that attempted to discard the "scrofulous" (Moses's word) tenements entirely. By the late nineteen-sixties, thousands of Bronx families were eager to move again.

Arthur Taub is a retired health-care consultant for the United Federation of Teachers, who came to Co-op City in 1970. He and I had coffee and talked not long ago in a diner at the Bartow Avenue shopping plaza in Co-op City. Arthur Taub has a full head of white hair and a blunt-featured, Hungarian face. To say that he is a good guy is not a value judgment but a simple description of the aura he gives off. In reminiscent mode, Arthur Taub leans his head back, closes his eyes, and speaks slowly, in a gravel-toned Bronx voice. "I was born and have lived all my life in the Bronx," he told me. "The last place we lived before here was Kingsbridge Terrace near 231st Street. My wife and I had two young daughters, and we liked the area, but the building was running down. I was paying a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month for a two-bedroom—pretty good, even for 1969—and mine was the highest rent in the building, so consider what the other tenants were paying. Some were paying seventy-five dollars, or fifty-nine. At those rents, the landlord couldn't afford to maintain it. Frequently in the winter we had no heat, and we'd have to find other places to stay. We heard about the Co-op City project, with its spacious apartments and low equity and low maintenance. We were looking for someplace we could live forever. We thought this was Shangri-La."

Here the paths to utopia ran through bureaucracy. The beginnings of Co-op City involved print so fine as to be microscopic, and tape so red you needed dark glasses to view it full on. Co-op City's basic purpose was to keep middle-class people like Arthur Taub from moving to the suburbs. The underlying philosophical ethos its developers shared was a left-wing idealism—real, feigned, or both, depending on whom you ask. A nonprofit organization called the United Housing Foundation designed and sponsored the project. Abraham E. Kazan, the president of the U.H.F., declared, "I am a coöperator, interested only in building the coöperative commonwealth." Even today, residents of Co-op City are referred to not as tenants or shareholders but as coöperators. The U.H.F. was created in the fifties by leaders of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America to build housing for union members. Jacob S. Potofsky, the head of the A.C.W.A., said that "all races, creeds, and colors" would live in Co-op City. The U.H.F. had already built a number of New York housing projects, including Rochdale Village, an integrated five-thousand-eight-hundred-and-sixty-unit development in Queens.

Most of the money for the Co-op City project came from the New York State Housing Finance Agency. The H.F.A. gave the U.H.F. a mortgage of two hundred and sixty-one million dollars, a sum larger than all the other mortgages it had

THE CENTAUR

And when there was nothing that lay between us,
not even the nothingness that had
come to mean something—had meant something
to me—
we felt clumsy; irredeemable, somehow.
And reason, that had once had over lust an effect
like rinsing,
now cancelled it out. He wept openly,
like a man, like one who can't understand, or
won't accept it, that the decision
to refrain from killing—
to cripple, instead—is a human choice, finally,
not animal,
the heart not so much broken as
left beating in a metaphysical kind of disrepair that gets
called a brokenness. When
had the world become so
inexact, or ourselves, who had lived too long, perhaps,
inside it, so forgiving
of inexactness?
He shook in the light. Beside me. His arm lay thrown
across my chest like a stole of foxheads, its glamour
stranded now, somewhere
between fetish and perverse
sorrow. It was as difficult to know, anymore,
the difference between being truly dissatisfied
and merely unastonished
as it was to look at him.
But I did look: small birds—a-sway, then
back again, as the bamboo sways them . . .
I looked again:
a hatch of flies,
in a false spring whose falseness
changes nothing of how it must feel, to have risen
up into the air for the first time.

—*Carl Phillips*

ever given, put together. The H.F.A. made the loan under the state's Mitchell-Lama program, devised by the legislature in 1955 as a response to middle-class flight from New York. Mitchell-Lama loans built and subsidized apartment complexes for people who earned too much to qualify for public housing but not enough to afford a decent place in the city at market rates.

The rest of the Co-op City project's construction cost, estimated at the time to be two hundred and ninety-three million dollars, came from money paid by the coöperators themselves for shares in the coöperative. Each family paid a purchase price of about four hundred and fifty dollars a room for apartments from two rooms to as large as six. About three thousand dollars for a brand-new six-room apartment could hardly be improved upon in the city even then. The shareholders also paid a very reasonable monthly maintenance fee based on apartment size. A big restriction, however, was that the shareholders could not sell their apartments except back to the co-op. Under different arrangements, the original purchase price would have been called a security deposit or key money, and the maintenance rent. Technically, though, the apartments were (and are) the property of the shareholders.

If you've seen Soviet-era apartment complexes in Russia or Eastern Europe, Co-op City looks like them. They have the same stark, modernist architecture, the same lonesome open spaces between the buildings, same walkways, same benches. (The Soviet-built high-rises do generally appear to be in much worse shape than Co-op City.) Coincidentally, some of the men most important to Co-op City's founding came from Russia to America when they were young. Abraham Kazan, of the U.H.F., arrived in New York from Kiev in 1904; Jacob Potofsky, of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, was born in Radomyshl; and Herman J. Jessor, the chief architect of Co-op City and other U.H.F. projects, emigrated from Russia when he was twelve. Nowadays, it is hard to remember how taken for granted the spirit of socialism and coöperative progressivism used to be in certain influential circles in America—it's as if someone had flipped a switch in about 1975 and an entire way of thinking was gone. Like the Soviet high-rise projects, Co-op City is a survival from a more collectivist age into today's world of every-man-for-himself.

New York's unions, in particular, were stronger when Co-op City began. The project was supposed to be a complete union shop—you couldn't even move in without union movers—and the heads of many major unions sat on the Co-op City board of directors. Perhaps my favorite Woody Allen joke is in his movie "Sleeper," in the scene when the Sleeper, Woody Allen's character, who has been frozen in 1973, is thawed out two hundred years later. Scientists of the future are debriefing him, and they tell him that America is no more, and he asks what happened, and one of the scientists says, "According to history, over a hundred years ago a man named Albert Shanker got ahold of a nuclear warhead." Albert Shanker was the skinny, narrow-tie-wearing, bespectacled, rumpled, dogged, always-in-the-news president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York. He served on the board of Co-op City in the seventies and died in 1997. As it happened, Albert Shanker was a friend of Arthur Taub. "Albert *loved* that joke!" Arthur Taub said when I asked him about it.

The first families moved into Co-op City on December 10, 1968, a day so cold that it froze the engine block of the truck bringing the belongings of Phil and Ann Herskowitz and their two children to 900 Baychester Avenue—Building One. The project's early occupants referred to themselves as pioneers. Their first February, a blizzard hit the city and stranded a lot of drivers on the interstate nearby, and the hardy few then in Building One hosted hundreds of drivers who had left their cars. "In those years, there was basically nothing here," Arthur Taub remembers. "No sidewalks, no traffic lights, no bus stops, no stores. My wife had to push a shopping cart through sand down to this co-op supermarket they had set up in a garage. Everywhere the ground was just sand that had been dredged from the bottom of Gravesend Bay and pumped in from Orchard Beach in a pipe three miles long. There were still seashells in it, lying around."

As the buildings were finished, more families moved in, floor by floor. So many came from the southern part of the Bronx that that area's racial and financial picture changed. Co-op City offered big apartments, great views, walk-in closets, parquet floors, free heat and utilities. From May to October, all the buildings enjoyed central air-conditioning; these were apartments for people not expected to own summer homes. Joseph and Amelia Pahmer moved in; he was a baker in the Bulova Watch Company employee cafeteria. So did Henry Zipper, a business agent for the Department of Sanitation, and his wife, Eva. Also, Irving Witkin, the dean of boys at George Washington High School in Manhattan, and Mrs. Witkin. New arrival Solly Kraska was a production man in the ladies'-suit and -coat business. Mrs. Hilowitz came with her husband, Nathan, who worked for Grumman Aerospace on Long Island. Arthur Plutzer, Sam Fenster, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Grobdruck, Abraham and Frieda Yellin, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Arbor, Harvey Josephowitz, Sol Oratofsky, and Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Group all moved to Co-op City in the early years.

Jewish families made up at least three-fourths of Co-op City's original population. Some old-timers say the number was even higher, but the co-op's management would not give out the real figure so as not to seem too far away from the stated goal of diversity. The remaining twenty-five or fifteen per cent consisted of blacks, Latinos, Italians, Irish, and almost no Wasps. The pioneer population was in any event a lively and enthusiastic bunch, forming clubs of all kinds (fishing, astronomy, belly dancing) and jumping into the civic life of their co-op. Arthur Taub joined a community-action group in his building which grew out of discussions people had in the laundry rooms while doing their wash. Boosters of the co-op noted proudly that serious crime did not exist in the project during the early years, and what crimes there were tended to be purse snatchings and other petty theft against the place's many elderly. The boast does need a small asterisk, however; among those who moved to Co-op City in the early years were Mr. Berkowitz and his son, David. Some years after moving out, David Berkowitz became Son of Sam, a famous murderer in the recent history of New York.

In the construction of Co-op City, mistakes were made. Substandard materials, in certain instances, were used. Shoddy workmanship was allowed. Buildings were faced with bricks so porous and so poorly pointed that rainwater came through when storms hit them straight on. Apartments on the very top floors were roofed imperfectly, and cracks large enough that occupants could look up and see the sky were revealed. Landfill that was supposed to be laid down so as to prevent excessive settling did not have that done. Expensive pipes and ducts whose manufacturer warned that they must not be left out in the weather were. Construction materials from the site were removed without authorization and not returned. Entire mansions up in Westchester County (people say) were built with materials stolen from Co-op City. In many and widely scattered bank accounts, construction funds were secreted. Fortunes, probably, were gained. Estimated figures for the project's cost were revised upward, from two hundred and ninety-three to three hundred and forty to, finally, four hundred and fifty million dollars. These and other events of the project's construction are described more accurately in the passive voice than in the active, because in a practical, legal sense they were the acts of nobody: not a single company that did construction work on Co-op City remained in existence a year or two after the project was done.

Even before then, many of Co-op City's coöperators had begun to wonder if they might have been screwed. First, rumors said that the project's cost had risen and the coöperators' maintenance charges soon would, too. The defects in the buildings quickly became visible for anybody to see. In retrospect, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the bait and switch was on. While people were still moving in, the monthly maintenance fees stayed at their attractively low levels—$23.02 a room, then $31.46 a room, for a top total of under two hundred dollars for a six-room apartment. When the thirty-five buildings and fifteen thousand-plus apartments were almost filled, Co-op City management announced a maintenance increase of twenty-five per cent over the next two years, to be followed by an increase of fifty-seven per cent over the following three.

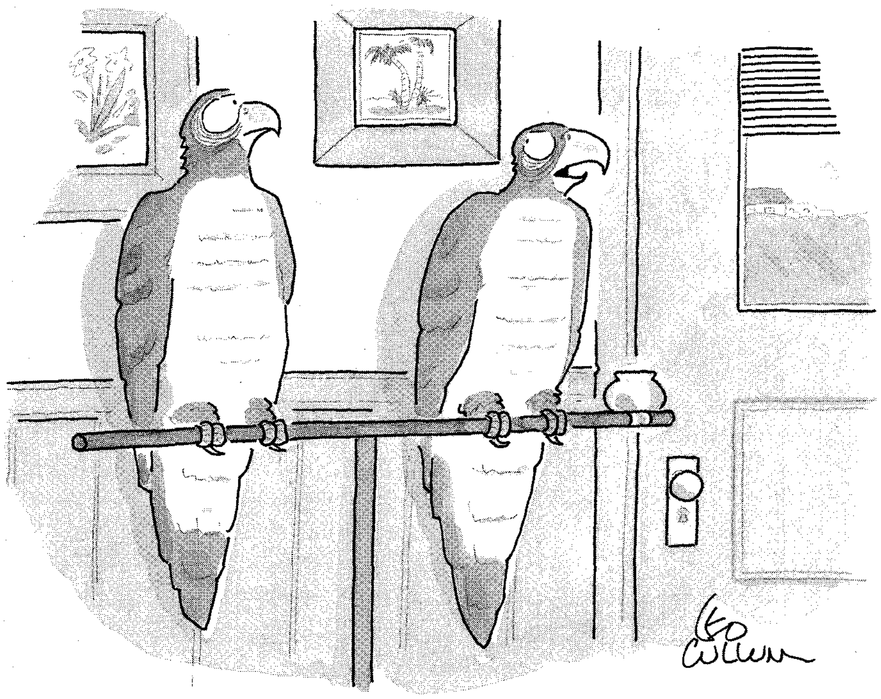
In other words, the maintenance was going up eighty-two per cent, or almost doubling in five years. Of the sixty thousand then living in Co-op City, more than twelve thousand were retirees on fixed incomes. This affordable place to live, arrived at with some trouble and a sense of last resort, formed the basis of household economies that were often calculated to the cent. For the young working people with families, the maintenance increase would mean complicated and unwelcome rearrangements in their lives. Everybody knew what a rip-off the construction had been; now management expected them to pay the tab. Cornered into a fight, the residents of Co-op City ended up waging a minor revolution for self-determination—against the project's creators and management, against the powers of the city and the state, and against generally unsympathetic public opinion—that deserves somewhere a modest statue of its own.

Nothing if not organized, the coöperators (many disliked that term, from seeing it too often in the "Dear Cooperators" salutation at the head of ominous letters from management) formed a steering committee. It would be known afterward as Steering Committee I. Logically, the first thing the committee did was sue. Somebody's son-in-law was the accountant for Louis Nizer, well known as a divorce lawyer for movie stars. Nizer met with members of the steering committee in his Manhattan office, sort of enthroned on a dais that made him look taller than his actual height, which was not much above five feet. After listening to their story, he agreed to take their case for the bargain price of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, or ten dollars a family. Nizer brought suit for fraud against the United Housing Foundation, the Housing Finance Agency, and Community Services, Inc., the for-profit arm of the U.H.F., which had directed the construction. The suit alleged that the defendants had misrepresented the financial status of the co-op when selling stock to shareholders with intent to defraud. The defendants hired their own big gun, Simon Rifkind, a former federal district-court judge.

Because stock fraud is a federal crime, the case went to federal district court, where the judge found for the defendants. Then a circuit-court judge reversed the decision, and the defendants appealed to the Supreme Court. It agreed to hear the case and, with some dispatch, did, finding (in effect) for the defendants by a ruling of lack of jurisdiction. Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., for the majority, wrote that the sale of stock in a co-op is not subject to federal regulation because co-op shares and shares of stock in a company are fundamentally not the same: the first is bought for personal use of the purchaser, the second for return on investment dependent on the efforts of others. Experts had warned that, if the Co-op City residents won, the whole structure of coöperative housing would fall apart from fear of similar suits by unhappy tenants.

While the lawsuit was going on, the shareholders formed Steering Committee II, whose purpose was to seek legislative redress in Albany. Its efforts went essentially nowhere. Next, they set up Steering Committee III, which eventually hit on the idea of organizing a rent strike of the whole co-op. Elected president of Steering Committee III was a thirty-two-year-old shareholder named Charlie Rosen.

Then Charlie Rosen was a skinny chain-smoker with bushy dark hair. Now he no longer smokes, and the extra pounds attendant on quitting have filled him out, and his hair is white, wavy, and distinguished. At the time of the strike, he was working as a typographer on the production floor of the *Post*. His voice still seems pitched to be heard above the sound of machinery, and his manner is often broad and Zero Mostelian. He and I talked for eight or ten hours in the kitchen of his Co-op City apartment, among other places, while he enlarged on Co-op City's politics, and on human events in general, with affectionate scorn. Once, I asked in passing about Abraham Kazan, the U.H.F. president, and about Kazan's idealistic dream of



"If I were to tell you something, would you promise not to repeat it?"

building the coöperative commonwealth. Rosen responded with such a scourging of Abe Kazan and all other bigwig hypocrite betrayers of the working class that I wished I had phrased the question in a more neutral way. "Ian! Ian!" he cried. "Don't you know what these people are?! *Where are you from*?!"

To describe the rent strike and his part in it, Rosen began back in the late nineteenth century, when his father was a boy in Warsaw. He described how his father learned to read by studying anarchist literature, and became an anarchist, then a Communist, then moved to America; and how his father was kicked out of the Communist Party after starting a small garment shop here, because owners weren't allowed to become Party members; and how he was a knitter, setting up knitting machines in the garment district, working on them from underneath on his back on a skid; and how his mother grew up in the city of Kamenets-Podolski, in Ukraine, and had to hide in her house during pogroms, and how she and other family members got away to Bucharest and walked from there to Antwerp, and then took a ship to America; and how she was a radical Socialist Zionist, and went to Palestine, and fell in love with an Arab, and decided that Zionism was racism, and came back to America, and became a passementerie worker (a worker who does garment piecework, like tassels or fringe, by hand); and how she always worked with her hands moving quickly and a cigarette hanging from the side of her mouth; and how she made the tassels on the curtain at the Metropolitan Opera, and how proud the family was of that;

and how she was a Stalinist, even after 1939, as well as a member of the passementerie workers' union; and how she met his father, who was by then the president of the Knit Goods Workers' Union; and how he, Charlie (real name: Shachna), was born, and his brother, Jake; and how no language but Yiddish was spoken in the home, and how for his family about the worst thing a person could be was a Trotskyite, and how they loathed exploiter bosses and fake Socialists; and how he, Charlie, went to public schools, and then to many colleges, and how he found the classes and the other students at college mostly out of touch with the world and ridiculous, so he never got a degree; and how he became a Communist, and visited the Soviet Union, and met Khrushchev; and how he thought hippies were completely fake radicals, and fools to boot, with their ridiculous drugs, getting arrested for something so stupid when there were many real and serious things to get arrested for;

and how he became a typographer, and worked the lobster shift (twelve-thirty to seven in the morning); and how he met his wife, Lynn, in a Ukrainian folk-dancing club of which he was the only Jewish member, and how he and Lynn got married, and were living on the Upper West Side in a little place, and wanted to start a family; and how she heard about Co-op City, but he was reluctant at first because he thought of the Bronx as a place you come *from*, not move *to*, and how rudely and dismissively the Co-op City personnel treated them and other prospective buyers when he and Lynn went to see about a place, but he didn't care about that or about all the coöperative baloney in the literature, because he just wanted a cheap place to live like anybody else, and this looked like it; and how they paid the two thousand-plus for a five-room apartment with an advance on a small inheritance from Lynn's grandmother; and how they moved on December 31, 1970, into Apartment E on the seventh floor of Building Twenty-two A; and how delighted they were with all the space and light; and how Lynn became pregnant soon; and how they had one kid and another on the way when the new maintenance increases were announced; and how he was elected the chairman of his building's shareholder organization; and how, when the shareholders decided to fight the increases, he knew just who the enemy was and what the strategy should be.

Well, it was quite a strike. It lasted for thirteen months—from June of 1975 to July of 1976. When the members of the United Housing Foundation on the co-op's board of directors saw it coming, they resigned; having dodged the fraud lawsuit, the U.H.F. could walk away in the clear. The union leaders and shareholders on the board resigned, too, and that left no one to run the co-op except the state, inescapably involved by virtue of the fact that the co-op owed it (that is, the H.F.A.) hundreds of millions of dollars. Lee Goodwin, the state commissioner of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, set about to break the strike and collect the withheld money; she said that its continued nonpayment was imperilling the H.F.A.'s liquidity.

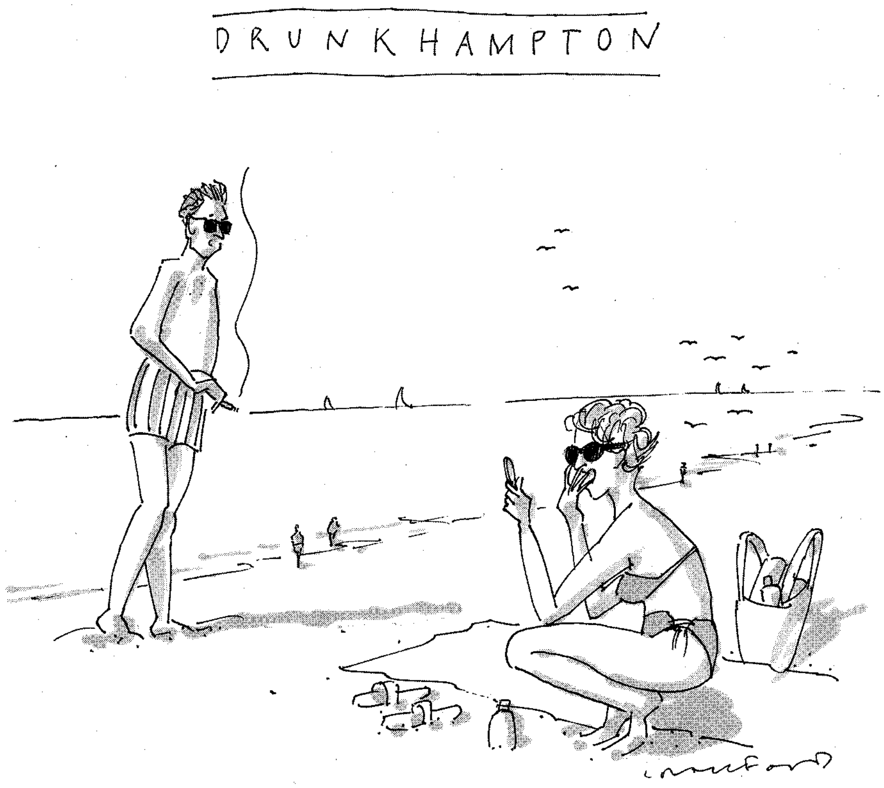
First off, the state got a court order enjoining the strikers from striking. When the steering-committee members understood that violating the injunction could mean jail sentences, many of them resigned. Ten members, however, remained, and continued violating the injunction assiduously.

Special weapons that seem to frighten the middle class more than the very rich or the very poor were deployed. The bank accounts of all strike leaders were frozen, and so for the next year they could apply for no loans and had to pay all their bills in cash. Along with that came the heavier artillery: a co-op-wide foreclosure, and evictions to follow. Between eighty and ninety per cent of the co-op had joined the strike; eviction threatened more than thirteen thousand families. An official of the H.F.A. noted that this would be "the largest single residential-foreclosure action in history." Rosen told his fellow-strikers that never in a million years would the state dare to evict the twelve thousand five hundred elderly retirees among them. He said that crowds would immediately surround the apartments targeted for eviction and make removal impossible. ("But all they had to do was find a moment when no one was looking and evict just *one* family," Rosen says now, "and everybody else would have been so petrified they would have called off the strike. I still don't understand why Lee Goodwin didn't do that.")

A few months after the strike began, the members of the steering committee stood trial in Bronx Supreme Court on contempt charges for violating the injunction. Thousands of Co-op City people came to the trial, filling the courtroom and massing on the steps and sidewalks outside. The strike leaders' defense described the thieves' bazaar of the place's construction, a failure for which the state, in its supervisory role, was ultimately responsible. About the charges themselves the defendants had little to say, being guilty of them. Each steering-committee member went through hours of questioning on the stand. At the mention of jail time, the committee member Murray Lerner, a retired furrier with thick glasses, stood up and began to shout, "When I'm in jail, I demand kosher food!" Uproar and applause ensued. (Rosen: "And Murray didn't even *keep* kosher. He was a Communist from way back.") Unsurprisingly, the judge ruled against the strikers. He fined the steering committee two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, plus five thousand dollars a day as long as the strike continued. He fined the individual members twenty-five thousand dollars each, plus a thousand dollars a day. Rosen told the judge he'd pay the fines first thing after his Master Charge bill.

"There wasn't a person among us who wasn't scared," the committee member Ben Cirlin says. "We were just ordinary working people—a shoe salesman, a lady who ran a day-care center, an electrician, a production manager at a factory. I drive a school bus for handicapped kids. All of us were wondering what we'd got ourselves into. Every time I saw a police car around my building, I was afraid they'd come for me. My wife and I had stuff ready to take in case I was suddenly hauled away. But Charlie was amazing. He's a brilliant judge of people, he understood how people thought. Every day there was some new frightening development. I wish I had as much hair on my head as they served me injunctions. When we were in despair, which happened often, Charlie could pick us up with an inspiring talk or a funny remark. Charlie was the core of everything."

Nobody at the higher levels of power stood on the strikers' side. The governor, Hugh Carey, stayed aloof and waited for the state to crush them. The Bronx Democratic machine worked against them openly and otherwise; its Democratic club, the largest in the city, conspicuously did not back the strike. The *Times*, exasperated and fed up, said in an editorial, "The reality which the rebellious tenants at Co-op City seem unwilling to face is that the state cannot grant them additional subsidy, not only because its own funds are overcommitted but because there is no justification for giving them a position even more favored than the one they now enjoy." The *Wall Street Journal* rooted for eviction, urging the state to "make an example" of the strikers. Con Edison let itself be maneuvered into putting up big red-lettered posters all over the complex one winter day threatening to turn off the electricity. For purposes of persuasion, the state had let the bill slide. To pay it, strikers brought Hefty bags of residents' personal checks in shopping carts to Con Ed's Manhattan headquarters, along with the TV news.



"May I have this dance, Miss?"

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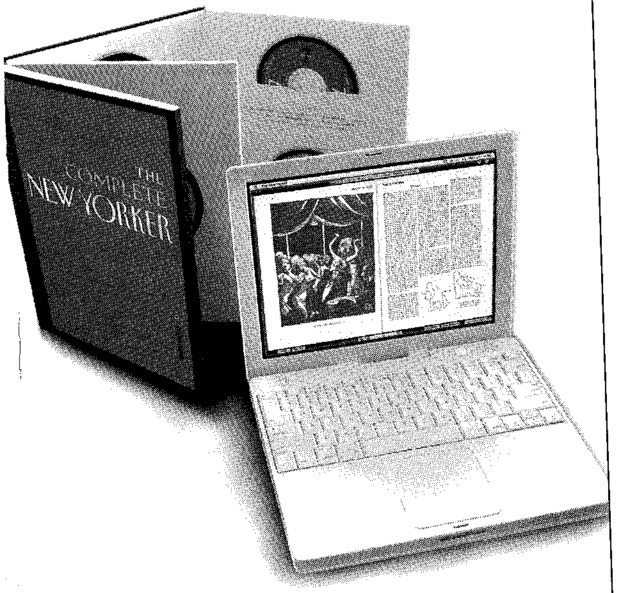

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synonym for 'Jewish
housing.' . . . Puerto Ricans and Hispanics don't understand co-ops and don't have the money for co-ops, and neither do blacks. . . . If you're building a co-op, if you don't have any rental apartments, you are, in effect, creating a white enclave." He warned that the move of so many whites from their former Bronx neighborhoods to Co-op City would devastate the borough. He was right about that. For some years after the opening of Co-op City, apartment buildings in other parts of the Bronx disintegrated—once, vividly, when a building within sight of Yankee Stadium caught fire and sent a plume of smoke skyward during a nationally televised baseball game.

But, as for the white enclave, Co-op City's original population did not stay the same for long. A rabbi said that he was losing his Co-op City congregation to "mortality, move-outs, and Miami Beach." Despite the supposed intrinsic Jewishness of co-ops, the families who moved into the newly vacated apartments tended to be black or Latino. This trend in new arrivals has continued: today, black and Latino families are about three-quarters of the population of Co-op City.

Civic participation in the co-op is not as widespread as in the early days. Fewer people vote in board elections than used to. The Greenway, where the rent-strike meetings were and where ten thousand once assembled to hear Charlie Rosen, had to be paved over for parking in 2003; the continued decay of the parking garages left not much choice. The small-town atmosphere some remember from the strike has become subtler. I think it's still there, though. Sometimes when I'm going back from Co-op City to midtown I take the Bronx M7 bus, which runs express all the way to its first stop in Manhattan, at 122nd Street near Second. During most of its existence, Co-op City has had good express-bus service. On weekday mornings, when people are drowsing slumped together on their commute, immensities of city infrastructure go by the windows like shadows, and the bus is as comfy as a baby carriage. Then or on later buses, the passengers don't seem to talk a lot. A sense of shared purpose and unforced companionship balances against the big-city custom of anonymity. Perhaps privacy, that gift bestowed by the city (according to

E. B. White), has seeped into this young housing project with age.

One of Abraham Kazan's obituaries quoted an answer he often made to critics of his housing projects: "We are not only demolishing rat-traps and building decent homes, we are giving people the opportunity to let the sun into their apartments and enjoy gardens and trees." The first time I walked around in an empty apartment in a Co-op City high-rise, I saw what he meant about the sun. Mike Miller, a sales representative for Riverbay (the shareholder-run corporation that oversees Co-op City), told me that two of the three different high-rise configurations in the project are designed so that every apartment has windows on at least two sides. Places in the apartment, when I stood in them, had the seeming airiness of perches in the sky. With other high-rises full of similar apartments all around, the effect is of a well-laid-out stadium where all the spectators congratulate themselves on what good seats they have. Looking from the window, I was again reminded of places I've seen in Russia—of old monuments from the war, of park benches around a statue of Lenin's wife, of a little plaque on the wall of a log house commemorating the Stakhanovite hero farmworker who once lived there. Certain moments of individual idealism may be so pure that, no matter what history does afterward, they leave some substantial good behind.

Today, the president of Co-op City's board of directors is a short, energetic first-grade teacher named Leticia Morales. She holds an M.S. in bilingual education and has a daughter, two sons, and two granddaughters. She divides her time between job, family, and her duties as president (an unpaid position) of a co-op with an annual budget of a hundred and sixty-five million dollars. Her temperament is that of the ideal jury forewoman—calm, consensus-minded, sweet-voiced, fair. She just won reëlection, and what she wants to do during the next year or two is grand. For complicated reasons involving Abe Kazan's nephew and a grudge against Con Ed, Kazan built an entire power plant as part of the original Co-op City complex, and for even more complicated reasons it has never generated one watt of electrical power. Leticia Morales says that when the startup process is complete, in 2008, the power plant will be working, finally; she says that it will save the co-op millions a year in energy bills, and more when it begins to sell some of the power back to Con Ed.

Also, Metro North trains that run along the shore to places like Darien and Norwalk go right by Co-op City. Leticia Morales is in talks to persuade Metro North to stop there; she points out that her community has a larger population than many commuter towns. A station would need to be built. From it the trip would be about thirty minutes to midtown. Also, Co-op City has a lot of kids with nothing to do after school. Crime has gone down in the project since 2001, but there is still a crime problem. In December, police and federal agents arrested fourteen young men for selling handguns and other weapons on Co-op City grounds. Leticia Morales would love to open a youth center in one of several locations she has in mind in or near Co-op City. And, as part of the co-op's never-ending cycle of repairs, she also will begin replacing most of its windows, of which there are about a hundred and thirty-five thousand, along with about six thousand terrace doors.

"This is just a beautiful place to live," she told me. "We have people from everywhere, more than sixty thousand working people and retired people with beautiful values. We are the largest naturally occurring retirement community in the world. When all of these different people come together, it's—how can I tell you? It's like the moment of silence we had on the Greenway after 9/11. We bring a great richness to each other."

Al Shapiro, the longtime Co-op City official who joked about the Siwanoy casino, seems world-wearier and gloomier than she. The gloom and weariness turn out to be faux, however—a manner put on to mask a deep fervor.

"It's incredible how decent most folks are here," Al Shapiro said. "What's been accomplished in Co-op City, socially, is beyond imagining. From all these different parts and all these difficulties we've made a safe, viable community. We take people with backgrounds from all over the world and chew 'em up and digest 'em and spit out Americans. The rest of the country should take a lesson from here."

Normally, the previous sentence would be the conclusion, but there's one other thing: privatization. After twenty years, Mitchell-Lama projects that have paid off their state loans are allowed to privatize. If a two-thirds majority of the shareholders in a Mitchell-Lama co-op agree, they can assume full ownership of their apartments and, as they wish, sell them for what the market will pay. A portion of the proceeds—called a "flip tax"—goes back to the project's management; the seller keeps the rest. Here is where big dollar signs come in. At former Mitchell-Lama projects in other parts of the city, apartments have sold for many hundreds of thousands. Were Co-op City to privatize, the current shareholders, whose equity in their apartments is now effectively zero, would gain equity worth a lot of money.

This is, of course, a fraught issue for the co-op. For a long time after the twenty-year period had passed, it took no action on privatization. Only in the last couple of years have people started to talk seriously about it. Opponents of the idea say that privatization goes against the whole purpose of Co-op City, that it will cause maintenance charges to rise, that wealthier people will move in, that tax abatements and other benefits of Mitchell-Lama status will be lost, and that the middle-class workers the place was designed for will again be shut out of New York housing. A recent report by the city revealed what an official called "a staggering loss of affordable housing," largely because of the number of apartments leaving Mitchell-Lama over the past few years.

Supporters of privatization say that maintenance charges are going to go up anyway—with the H.F.A. finally paid off, Co-op City has a new, four-hundred-and-eighty-million-dollar bank-financed mortgage, and higher interest payments to go with it. They say that the money brought in by the flip tax would actually cause maintenance to go *down*, that the place is probably going to privatize anyway and there's no point in paying now for some future seller's profit, that the equity gained would be useful for financing kids' college educations. Last year, the co-op voted, fifty-five to forty-five per cent, to look into the question and to make a final decision in five years.

"I wonder why we're not getting any new converts."

After the strike, Charlie Rosen served as the board of directors' first shareholder chairman. Later, he became the head of the Gloria Wise Boys and Girls Club, an organization that runs programs for kids and seniors throughout the Bronx. Last year, after reports that his development director had made an improper loan of eight hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars to Air America Radio, and the city and state stepped up an investigation of the club's finances, Rosen had to resign. He is now retired, and he takes an aficionado's interest in the doings of the co-op. Given his leftist past, he might be expected to oppose privatization, but he's undecided. "It's an argument with morality on both sides," Rosen said. "There's the income from the flip tax, the equity, the motivation to fix up your apartment, the ability to pass it on as an asset to your children. On the other hand, where are the Charlie and Lynn Rosens of today going to find a place in New York? It's interesting, though, that if privatization went through, you're talking about seventy-two thousand rooms at an estimated fifty thousand dollars a room. With the people who are living here now, that would be the largest transfer of real-estate wealth to people of color in U.S. history."

I was walking the curving paths of Co-op City not long ago when a couple came unhurriedly the other way. I said hello, they answered cordially, and we talked. They introduced themselves as Albert and Merdell Buckham. They said they had lived in Co-op City since 1990. Both are retired home-health-care aides. Albert assisted disabled people, and before that worked for thirty years for the Department of Sanitation in Montego Bay, Jamaica. He has a rough complexion and light-brown eyes. He wore a Mets cap, blue and orange. Merdell is wide, with a broadly smiling face, and she wore a tight knit cap from which a few curls peeked out. I asked what they thought of privatization, and they laughed. "Who's going to pay t'ree hundred t'ousand dollar for a one-bedroom apartment with elevators not workin', columns all swell up with moisture, laundromat closed?" Merdell Buckham asked.

"We would lose the senior-citizen benefits, then rich people move in, poor move out, rents go up. I get eighty-six dollars a month in pension!" Albert Buckham said. "And my pension sixty-eight dollars a month!" Merdell said. They laughed again. "Many years I was takin' care of this nice Jewish lady on Long Island," Merdell went on. "I pray to God for that lady every night."

"This used to be a quiet, nice place to live," Albert said. "But not now. They voted the good people out and the bad ones in."

"Now we have the yout's runnin' around, stealin', shootin', sellin' drugs," Merdell said. "But the police here are good, goin' upstairs, downstairs, in the lobby. I asked God to guide dem in findin' dem criminals. But I soon don't care, because we're movin' in t'ree months, back to Jamaica, and when I get there it will be *hot!*" (Great laughter.)

"We got fourteen children living, in the Bronx, New Jersey, Delaware, Philadelphia, so we will come and go," Albert said.

"I got fourteen children, and I don't want to be no burden to *anybody!*" Merdell said. "In Jamaica I'll live inexpensive, walk barefoot, keep chickens, plant t'ings in the eart'. Nobody has to take care of me. And when my time come I want *God* to take me home. He made me, and he can take me home." ♦

FICTION

INNOCENCE

BY RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA

Dinesh never became a famous writer, but he did become a writer, and he published several novels. I translated one of these from the original Hindi into English and tried to get it published here, but I was told that the background was too unfamiliar to be of interest to an American audience. Of course, it was very familiar to me; I had actually lived in New Delhi and was not only a witness to the principal events but a part of them.

In the novel, I was called Elisabeth (not my name). Dinesh himself, who was the narrator, became D. The fictional Elisabeth and the real me had both come to India to absorb the wisdom of a woman saint who lived in a tenement building near the Old Delhi railway station. The building was ancient, and so crammed with tenants and subtenants that it appeared to be leaning sideways. It was also very noisy, but the two rooms that our teacher occupied had a peaceful atmosphere. Her disciples sat cross-legged in a circle around her while she spoke of the Absolute, both in its aspect of the inconceivably immense and as the tiny Person no bigger than a thumb within the human heart.

The real Dinesh and the fictional D. had the same attitude toward our absorption in this heady stuff. He said that we lived in an India that had been invented in the nineteenth century by German professors, and that, by keeping our eyes fixed on mystical and mythical abstractions, we failed to look down at the earth and the people crowding it. It was only, he said, when something unpleasant happened to us—a sickness, or some fat shopkeeper cheating us, or a youth groping us on a bus—it was only then that we recognized that we were living in a real place, in a city like any other; and at once our noble, our spiritual India was degraded into a country of thievery and lechery. By the time he got to this point, the real Dinesh, like the fictional D., was very worked up, but, unlike D., he recovered himself quickly and said, "Not you, of course—this is not personal," and he flashed me a smile in which both his teeth and his glasses participated.

Dinesh and I were fellow-lodgers in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Malhotra, a childless middle-aged couple who looked more like brother and sister than like husband and wife. Both were small and delicate, and had ivory complexions, much fairer than Dinesh's slightly pockmarked skin. They had one servant, Gochi, an old and tattered sweeper woman who called her employers Sahibji and Bibiji—respectful forms of address that I, too, adopted. At first, Dinesh and I were the only lodgers, though there was another room available. The advantage of the house was that it was centrally situated—it was almost the only small domestic residence left in the area and was surrounded on all sides by huge commercial buildings—but it was tiny, and badly in need of whitewashing, with many cracks, which expanded during the monsoon season. There was a central courtyard with a series of little rooms opening out from it. In front, there was also a patch of garden in which a tree stood, with a single living branch and a few sickly leaves hanging from it.

I was glad to be staying in an Indian household, for I had not received a lot of invitations to local homes. At that time, there were many Westerners like me, in love with India, and people tended to laugh at us—perhaps because those of us who wore saris sometimes tripped over them, and although we were rapt while listening to Indian music, we couldn't tell one raga from another. Also, some of the foreign girls got involved with respectable Indian boys, whose families then had to rush to find brides for them or send them away for higher studies.

There was nothing like that between Dinesh and me, though we became good friends. He was from Kanpur, the son of a poor widow; he had won a scholarship to Delhi University and, after graduating, had got a job with All India Radio. He wanted to be a writer, and so did some of his friends, all of them with very little money to spare after sending most of their salaries home. Many of these friends were gloomy and bitter, but Dinesh seemed always to be in a good mood, though I noticed that his cheerfulness often became exaggerated in times of stress. He had a very bony face, and his pitch-black hair was straight and lank; his teeth were too numerous and too large for his mouth, but he was charming when he smiled.

He and I walked around the public parks and gardens, taking shelter from the hot sun in mausoleums or pavilions as we carried on our discussions. He laughed at my idea that it was almost impossible for anyone not Indian to understand India. "Oh, I see," he said with the amused irony that was his favorite mode of debate. "So it is your opinion that we are not like other humans but completely different, monstrous and bizarre? And, by the way, what about you? What about this?" he said, indicating my sari. "Why are you wearing it? Why are you loving our music, not to mention our food, our parathas and tandoori rotis and so on? And also, may I ask, why are you here at all? Isn't that bizarre?" He didn't give me time to answer—and, anyway, what was there to say? We, all of us here in Delhi, all of us pale foreigners, talked about it over and over—what we were looking for, and finding, in India. "Yes, yes, yes," Dinesh said, smiling with all his teeth. "I've heard about it—our spiritual dimension. Only where is it? Can you tell me that? Can you show it to me? Never mind. Let's speak about something more interesting, like, for instance—"

"The Malhotras," I said. "Our landlords."

Dinesh disliked gossip, but he had, reluctantly, told me a bit about them. They were obviously middle-class, educated people—both spoke good English, and he was, or had been, a lawyer—but their status had been marred by a scandal many years earlier. Dinesh briefly indicated that it had had something to do with gold smuggling, and that both of them had been involved. I was surprised: both of them? It was not so difficult to believe this of Sahib—there was something anxious about him, as if he wanted very much to be liked, or perhaps forgiven. He was always eager to make conversation—when he was at home, that is, which was not all that much. He would leave in the morning, in his black tie and panama hat, giving the impression that he was going out to conduct some business. But we tended to run into him in a modest coffeehouse, sitting over a cup of coffee and talking to the waiter. One afternoon, I saw him standing in the ticket line at a cinema, and when he noticed me he laid his finger on his lips, amused and tolerant of himself. He

MARCUS LEATHERDALE, "GITANJALI" (1993)/HOLASEK WEIR GALLERY

usually came home late at night, and then Bibiji would tell us that he had been delayed at the office. She said it in a very serious tone, which gave us no ground to suspect that there was no office.

Sahib liked to talk about how he had studied law in England and had eaten dinners at the Inns of Court. When he spoke of England, it was as if he were talking about a familiar friend. He was interested in hearing about the States, too; he had never been there but was hoping to go sometime—as a tourist, not as a student. What, he joked, was there left to study, at his age? Then he regularly asked me to guess how old he was. When I, as regularly, said thirty-five, which was at least ten years younger than he could have been, he smoothed his hair and chuckled that he had always been able to fool the world about his age.

Had he actually been in jail? He sometimes referred to his "trouble," as though he expected everyone to know what this had been. Dinesh told me, after I persisted in asking, that he had done time as a prisoner awaiting trial. Then he had been at least partially cleared, and placed on probation, though stripped of his license to practice law. It was the two other men accused in the case who had been given long jail sentences; they were more palpably guilty than Sahib, who had been their dupe. And what about her? Dinesh shrugged, and said that she'd had to make several court appearances before the case against her was dropped. When I asked him how he knew, he said that it had all been in the papers. After that, he changed the subject.

It was impossible to think of Bibiji's having been involved in a criminal case. She was so proud and dainty, with the folds of her sari falling smoothly to her feet; her bangles were only glass, but probably they replaced some gold jewelry that was, due to circumstances, temporarily absent. Unlike her husband, Bibiji did not leave the house very often. Maybe she was afraid of meeting people and having to wonder what they were thinking. In every exchange I had with her, she scanned my face for information—not about me but about herself, about how much I knew. Still, like her husband she seemed eager for conversation with her lodgers. There were never any visitors to the house, though she was fully set up to receive them in the living room, which was furnished with a blue sofa, two matching armchairs, and a carpet. She owned a china tea set, and every afternoon she took it out and sat on the sofa to enjoy several cups of tea with digestive cookies.

Whenever I happened to be at home, she invited me to join her. She repeatedly impressed upon me the details of how Sahib had studied in England and was a professional person, and how she herself had been educated at a ladies' college, where she had studied domestic arts and music. Sometimes she took out her harmonium and sat on the floor with it, singing songs that were a mixture of the erotic and the spiritual. She told me that she appreciated my love of Indian culture, and then she passed from talking about me to talking about Dinesh.

She said that she had first met him at a bus stop. When the bus arrived, there was the usual rush to board, in which she was pushed to the ground. In the scramble, only one person bothered to stop and help her up: Dinesh, thereby missing the bus himself. But he didn't care about that; he wanted only to make sure that she was unhurt. Even before they knew each other, he had responded to something delicate in her nature, as she had to the same in his. When she said that, she looked at me directly for the first time, and not, as usual, aslant with shyness and anxiety.

Dinesh was very attentive to her. He took care to fill the water buckets for her during the hours when the municipal supply was turned on. He noticed whenever she was running short of tea leaves and refilled her little cannister, buying tea with his own money, though, of course, she always paid him back. Neither of them could afford to be as generous as they may have wanted to be. But she took care of him as he did of her; she said that he was like a younger brother to her. When his glasses broke, she mended them with tape; or she cooked a little extra of the dish that she was preparing for her and her husband's evening meal. This meal she and Sahib always ate alone in their bedroom, with the door shut. It was only on reading Dinesh's novel that I learned that they had eaten not in silence but amid fierce and bitter whispers, in which each blamed the other for what had happened.

It was the fictional D. who described for me how Sahib had first met his two fellow-conspirators. It had happened in the sort of coffeehouse where he could still be found—over the same ketchup-stained tablecloths—but at that time he had been part of a very jolly group of friends, which included freelance journalists, a doctor who had lost his license, and the younger son of an industrialist. This last was trying to start a business of his own, and he introduced his prospective partner into the circle of friends. The new man was a different type from the rest, with cruder jokes and more oil on his hair. A businessman, he called himself; eager to please, he treated the others to a round of chicken kebabs.

Sahib had completed his studies several years before, but had not yet rented an office—he intended to do so the moment he had some clients; so it was at home that the two partners came to visit him. They said that they needed a lawyer to draw up their contracts and that he was just the person they were looking for. Bibiji served glasses of sugared lime water in order to get a look at them for herself. Later, she confided to D. that she'd had doubts about the businessman from the start, but that she'd liked the son of the industrialist. He was not much more than a boy, well-spoken, and with manners learned at one of the best schools in the country.

They came every day, and soon they offered Sahib a partnership in their venture. All they asked in return was a small investment to help with the initial purchase of gold from certain reliable sources, to be resold at fantastic profits via other reliable sources. Sahib was hesitant; he said that he would have to consult his wife. Bibiji objected, citing their total lack of business experience; he mentioned the promised profits, and they argued to and fro.

Then one morning, when Sahib was out, the son of the industrialist came to see Bibiji. She was just enjoying a cup of tea and chatting with Gochi, her old sweeper woman, who squatted nearby with the glass of tea that was part of her wages. When the visitor arrived, Gochi absented herself, and Bibiji took out another cup to serve her guest. He admired everything—not only the cup but the sofa, the carpet, and the wall hanging of Little Boy Blue in cross-stitch, which she admitted to be the work of her own hands. It was obvious to the industrialist's son, who was himself from a fine home, that she and Sahib came from good families. He acknowledged that this could not be said of his partner—but then he went on to describe a deal that this partner had already successfully concluded, with astonishing profits. The same result could confidently be expected of their own project, he said. One day, he promised, there would be an even costlier carpet on this floor, even larger, heavier bangles on Bibiji's wrists. And maybe she wouldn't be in this house at all but in one of the new mansions in the diplomatic enclave, with a motorcar standing before the door. No, he said, smiling, no need for her to learn to drive—a chauffeur would be at her disposal day and night.

The industrialist's son had to pay Bibiji only two more morning visits before she informed her husband that she was adding her jewelry to their input of capital. At that, Sahib cried out in shock and touched the gold that had adorned her since the day of their wedding. She laughed at him: bigger, better bracelets would be bought, rings, and ropes of pearls, and what would he say to a motorcar with chauffeur?

All this was described in Dinesh's novel—how Bibiji had persuaded her husband, brought him around. His account is in no way censorious; it is with affection that D. describes Bibiji's joyful cries and gestures at the prospect ahead. It is in subsequent chapters that D. narrates the scenes of nightly whispering behind the bedroom door, in which each blames the other for what eventually happened. "You were lucky," Sahib tells his wife. "It was you—you who should have gone, you who were guilty, not I." In answer, Bibiji simply raises her thin arms, whose sole adornment now is some colored glass bangles bought from a street hawker.

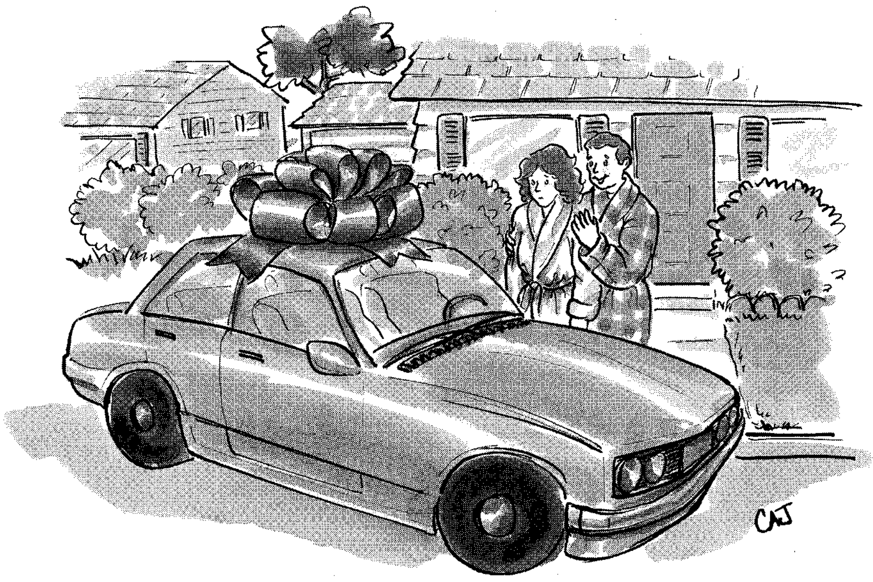
One day, I found Bibiji on her sofa with Gochi squatting near her on the floor, both of them in tears. What had happened? It was explained to me that Gochi's daughter and son-in-law had forbidden her to come here anymore. Another job had been found for her where the salary was higher and was also paid regularly. Gochi clutched Bibiji's feet and wet them with her tears, and Bibiji's tears fell on the spot on Gochi's head where the sparse hennaed hair had worn away. Both of them were helpless and hopeless in their different kinds of poverty.

I suggested that more income could be brought in by way of a third tenant for the empty room. And that was how Karuna—or Kay, as she told us to call her—came to us. I had met her in the Tibetan Colony, where impecunious foreigners like myself ate delicious messes that sometimes made us sick. We were joined there by a new group of young Indians—who were modern enough to drop out of school and leave home and family to discover (using the same terminology that we did) their own identity. Kay had not run away from home, exactly, but she had staked her claim for self-expression—which her father may not have understood but had tolerantly indulged. He was a brigadier in the Army, in charge of a hill-station cantonment. She often spoke of him, and seemed to admire him, though she laughed at what she called "his dodo ways." He supported her with checks and frequent calls and letters that she only sometimes answered.

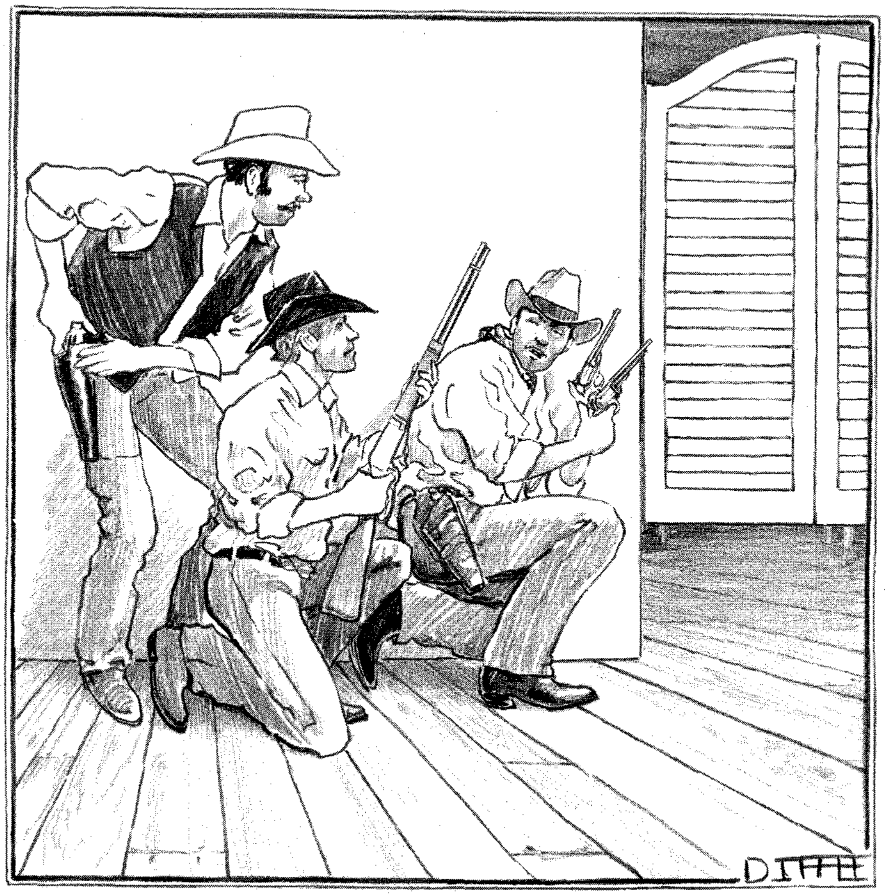
When I met her, she was living in a Y.W.C.A. hostel. She made scornful jokes about this place, and, when I told her about our empty room, she was ready to move in at once. I have to say here that the three rooms for rent in the house were no more than cubicles, each furnished with a string cot, a commercial calendar, and a water jug on a stand. This spartan interior was what Dinesh was used to—he had never known anything else—and it suited me perfectly, asceticism being what I had come to India for. It suited Kay, too, mainly because it was different from her home. Anyway, she soon had a rug on the cement floor and had replaced the calendar with a poster of a dead rock star.

Bibiji liked her immediately, and was fascinated by her, which Kay seemed to find natural. She was used to people wanting to be in her company, and she chattered away to Bibiji and to Sahib, who was also fascinated by her. I don't think she ever told them anything new or interesting; it was she herself that was so for them—the way she spoke and laughed at nothing in particular, unless it was the Y.W.C.A. or her hopelessly bourgeois family.

Dinesh got her hired in the English section of All India Radio. She became the disk jockey for a request program called "Yours, with Love," playing recent pop songs from England and America that had been selected by listeners with messages for their loved ones. She read these messages in a seductive voice—"This is for Bunny, and a million billion thanks, darling, for the fabulous times"—



"Honey, I got a brand-new bow for our car!"



"O.K., fellers, we shoot first, then Q. and A."

which made Sahib nod and smile in some sort of recognition, while Bibiji looked down shyly, as if she were the one being addressed.

To get Kay to work on time, Dinesh often had to wake her. He shouted from outside her door, and then, too shy to see a woman asleep in bed, he sent me in. She lay on her stomach, one hot flushed cheek pressed into the pillow, moaning for coffee. Sahib had bought a tin of Nescafé specially for her, and it gave him great pleasure to rush into the kitchen, where he otherwise never set foot, to pour water over the powder and stir it before handing it over to Bibiji or me to deliver. Dinesh stood outside the door, looking up at the ceiling in simulated disgust.

But he, too, seemed to enjoy Kay's company. He spoke to her in his usual torrent of often disconnected ideas—and although she kept saying, "Fantastic," she didn't really listen, and she interrupted him at intervals, usually with something so far removed from what he was saying that he stopped short in astonishment. I suppose her head was full of thoughts of her own that left little room for anything else.

But one evening she asked Dinesh, "What about them? . . . You know." She gestured in the direction of the Malhotras' bedroom, where, presumably, our landlords were already asleep, or talking together in voices so low that no sound could be heard.

The three of us—their "paying guests," as they called us—were in the courtyard, which was like a well with the sun pouring in all day, though at night some cool air descended.

"Their case," she went on.

Dinesh waved his hand impatiently. "That was twelve years ago."

"Twelve years! I was only eight."

"You must have been a nasty little brat."

"I looked like an angel, and I *was* one. Everyone said so." She ignored his exaggerated laughter. She was combing her hair, which fell around her in dark waves with auburn glints. I could see neither of them clearly in the dim starlight, but I was aware of Dinesh's eyes gleaming—or maybe I was aware only of his stifled excitement. We could hear the comb as she slowly, lovingly drew it through all that silken luxury; at the same time she said, "Shall I cut it off? It's such a nuisance."

"If you cut it off, you might get to work on time and not be fired, which will happen any day now," Dinesh said.

"Nobody is going to fire me. They love me too much. But, seriously, were they both in jail?"

"Who's been talking to you?"

"Oh, everyone talks. As soon as anyone hears where I'm living: 'Aren't those the people in the gold-smuggling case?' I suppose no one ever forgets."

"I suppose no one ever learns to mind his own business," Dinesh said.

"Do you think they're listening?" She lowered her voice. "The two of them with their ears glued to the door?"

It was easy to imagine—the small couple crouched behind the closed bedroom door, their hearts beating, wondering, What are they saying? Are they talking about us? What do they know? The thought seemed to make Dinesh angry and ashamed, and he turned on Kay: "So you sit gossiping with your friends? 'My landlords did this, my landlords did that—' "

"Well, did they? *Both* of them?"

Now he didn't trust himself to speak. He turned away and left us.

"But why's he mad at me?" Kay wondered.

She was truly puzzled by Dinesh's attitude. She was used to being admired by men and took it as her due. There was Sahib, every morning, lingering in wait for the cry for coffee, and in the evenings he came home earlier than he had before. Part of a lively social set, Kay was often on the point of going out when Sahib arrived—curses could be heard from her room, where she kept discarding one outfit for another. He hovered, smiling, around the door, clutching a book, and, as soon as she emerged, he held it up for her: "Are you acquainted with this book? What is your opinion of the writing?" Mostly, she had no time to answer him; she'd brush past on a wave of energy and fresh perfume that drowned his disappointment in sheer pleasure.

When she was home, she wandered all over the house, talking to anyone who was around. If she had to write a letter to her family—with much underlining and many exclamation points—she preferred to do it in the living room, where we could keep her company. This was Sahib's opportunity. He had found a tattered old copy of a novel by Françoise Sagan, and it fascinated him. He questioned Kay: "Is it true? Is this how modern girls behave, so free and knowing so much about sex?" The word "sex"—enticing, expectant—sat on his lips, waiting for her to take it up. Her laugh hinted at kingdoms hidden from him. He lowered the book. "And you? Do you have someone for your friend? A cavalier?" He shut one eye. "A *boy* friend?" More laughter from her, and he laughed, too, enjoying the conversation, enjoying being teased by her, enjoying her. At such moments, his true nature—spry, humorous—seemed to shine out from under its eclipse of disgrace and humiliation.

When Dinesh heard Sahib question Kay about books, he would say, "What makes you think she's ever read one?"

"That's all you know!" she cried, adding, "Dinesh hates me," but with a smile that showed she suspected that this was not quite true.

In his novel (in the character of D.), Dinesh admitted that he had never met anyone like Kay, an emancipated girl from her class. The only women he had ever been close to were his mother and his sisters. There was a constant exchange of letters between them, and it was easy to tell when one arrived with bad news. Later in the day, he'd announce that he was taking a leave from the radio station and would be departing on the evening train. When he returned, after a few days, he appeared to have settled whatever trouble he had found at home, or, at least, to have accepted it.

When Dinesh was away, Bibiji did not sing to her harmonium. But the day he came back she took it out again and accompanied herself to one of her ambiguous songs of love, human or divine. Sometimes Sahib stood behind her, with his fingers in his ears, playfully grimacing at us. But Dinesh, who was a great lover of Indian music and could recognize each raga from the first few notes, listened respectfully. If she made a mistake, he hummed the right notes for her. He hated the pop songs that Kay presented on her program; and if he found the Malhotras listening to her show he made a disgusted face. "Why are you listening to that stuff?" he'd say. "It's for idiots, by idiots."

Once Sahib answered him. "I love it. It's the music for young people. Don't you like young people?" He became coy, the way he did when he was on the brink of saying something he called "spicy." "I know *one* young person you like."

Perhaps we should have guessed Bibiji's feelings from her explosion of anger then. But how could we, how could anyone? Dinesh's attitude toward women had always been a protective one, and that was how he felt toward Bibiji. He accepted her description of him as a brother to her. It was the only relationship with a woman that he really knew.

With Kay, he thought of himself as a detached observer, analyzing her and her type. Probably he kept notes about her, as did D. in the novel. She had far less time to think about him. Often, she didn't come home after work but went with her friends to fashionable places that he had never seen. Some of her girlfriends were fugitives from arranged marriages, or had, like Kay herself, simply raised the flag of independence and made their families salute it. Away from their mothers and their ayahs for the first time, they were untidy and scatterbrained and gave parties at night, with music and dancing and drinks. Dinesh, of course, was not invited to these parties, but Kay told him, "They all want to meet you."

"Who wants to meet me?"

"My friends."

"What an honor," he said. He knew some of these girls from the radio station; they ignored him, as they did all the others who worked there for a living. But now Kay had told them that he was a writer, and this raised his status with them, for writers had articles written about them in magazines, with photographs of the foreign girlfriends who had followed them to India. Dinesh quite fiercely denied being a writer—he said that he hadn't published anything yet and perhaps never would.

"Then what is it you're scribbling all night?" I heard her challenge him, for, however late she returned from her outings, the light was always on in his room.

She was standing looking into his room, where he sat cross-legged on his bed, a notebook in his lap. She had let her hair fall loose—this scene was in the novel as well—and, winding a strand around her finger, said, "Are you writing a novel? Am I in it?" It didn't bother her that he ignored her. "What are you writing about me? Let me see—or is it too horrible and mean?"

Then he did look up—only to drop his eyes again immediately, for she hadn't noticed, or just didn't care, that the upper part of her sari had dropped down, revealing her breasts in their inadequate little blouse. He said, "Kindly shut my door and don't ever open it again."

"Listen to Mr. Grumpy! What's wrong with you? Did a monkey bite you?"

That night, D. wrote in his notebook, "If she weren't stupid and a fool, she'd be a whore." But elsewhere in the novel it was himself he called stupid and a fool.

It wasn't long before she left us. This happened a day or two after her father, the brigadier, came to visit—or, rather, to look us over. His Army jeep, standing outside, seemed as large as the house, and he himself overflowed the chair he occupied, with one stout leg laid across the thigh of the other. Sahib could not stop trying to make conversation. He spoke of golf, the latest cricket test matches, and other topics that should have been of interest to his visitor. But the brigadier kept studying the watch on his hairy wrist and asking when Kay was expected back. No one wanted to tell him that her

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hours were as unpredictable as she was.

He had plenty of time to size us up, and evidently we did not pass muster. I was the sort of foreigner he had no respect for (a "hippie type"), and the way he looked at Dinesh, with his much laundered shirt and his glasses mended with tape, made Sahib quickly explain, "Mr. Dinesh is a writer." When the brigadier just went on grimly tapping his boot with his Army baton, Bibiji added, "He is writing a novel."

"Where is she?" was the brigadier's only reaction, and, when we told him that she was out with friends, he said, "What friends? Who are they?"

But, actually, he knew very well where a girl like his daughter could go to amuse herself on the sort of allowance that he sent her. He had no objection to those friends—the children of other Army officers or of high-ranking bureaucrats. What he did object to was her living in the house with us.

When he returned the next day, he stayed outside in the jeep while Kay packed up her belongings. Silent in shock, we stood and watched her. She was in tears but not disconsolate. It seemed that her father had wasted no time finding a more suitable place for her: a room in the house of a colonel's widow. "Those are the only sort of people Daddy knows," she said. "Dodos like himself and boring bourgeois." But the house was near where some of her other friends lived and gave parties. "I'll come to see you," she promised. "We had so much fun." But she said it a bit absently, while fastening her suitcase and biting her lip, the way people do when they are hoping they haven't forgotten anything.

The days after Kay left were intensely hot—it was the middle of June—and, as always at such times, the atmosphere in the city was exceptionally charged. So was the atmosphere in the Malhotra house. There seemed to have been a change in the relationship between husband and wife. They were suddenly bitter and angry with each other. Perhaps this was the way they had always been once their bedroom door was shut, but now they didn't wait to be alone. They fought about Kay's departure, blaming each other for having let her father get the wrong impression.

Bibiji said, "You should have told him that you're a lawyer who has studied abroad, instead of all that nonsense about golf. And I didn't like the way he was looking at Dineshji."

Sahib explained, "You can be a famous writer, an M.A. from Oxford University—if you can't talk about whiskey and golf, then you're not fit to lick their boots. But with me he knew he was dealing with a person like himself. A gentleman."

"Yes, and what else do you think he knew?"

"Nothing! He knew nothing!"

"And, when you walk in the street, no one knows anything?" She lowered her voice to a whisper. "No one says, 'He's been inside'?"

He came up closer, threatening. "*You* put me there."

She didn't retreat an inch. "It's my fault. Everything is my fault. This is my fault." Here she shook her arms with the thin glass bangles on them. "Like a sweeper woman. That's what he thought—'My poor daughter, having to live in the house of a sweeper woman.' "

Sahib stepped back. He lowered his voice. "No one thinks that. They wouldn't dare."

"When you're poor, they all dare. They push you in the street." Bibiji had begun to shed little tears. "The milkman who hasn't been paid calls you bad names."

He whispered, "I'll pay him tomorrow. They'll all be paid. Don't. You're still my princess."

I was not there to witness the beginning of their next fight, and neither was Dinesh. This fight was actually about him, and he reconstructed it in his novel. The scene, in my translation, goes like this:

"What he didn't like was D. living in the same house with his daughter. *Looking* at her," Sahib said.

"He never looks at her," Bibiji said.

"Is it my fault that you have no eyes to see?"

"He has never in his life looked at her!"

"Not even when she is combing her hair?" Smiling, he made the slow, sensual gesture of a woman drawing a comb through her hair, each strand alive, tumbling over her shoulders and down her back. "I wouldn't like you to know what happens to him then." He came closer to whisper in her ear. "Like a dog. You've seen a dog?"

It was at this moment that D. in the novel—and perhaps also Dinesh in real life—came home. Full of fun, Sahib turned to him. "Don't you miss her?" he said, repeating the motion of the comb through waves of hair. D. couldn't even pretend not to understand, and, without looking at him, Bibiji fled into the kitchen. Her hands trembling, she began to peel potatoes.

Sahib was glad to be alone with D. He chuckled, man to man. "These girls—they're sent by the Devil to drive us poor devils mad. But isn't it a nice way to become a raving lunatic?"

"She's gone now," D. said. "So you can relax."

"Who wants to relax? That's for dead men. Who do you think she liked—you or me?"

D. went to his room. His landlord eagerly followed. He sat on D.'s bed and watched him change the shirt he wore at work for the one that was too frayed for outside. D.'s shoulders, now revealed by his undershirt, were not broad or manly, but Sahib said, "At least you're young—you have a chance. Perhaps she liked you. Perhaps she is saying to her daddy at this moment, 'Take me back to him!' Don't you think I have a good imagination? I should be writing the books, not you." He laughed loud enough for Bibiji to hear, so that she came out of the kitchen with the potato she was peeling.

"Did you hear that?" Sahib asked her. "He thinks I should write books and become a famous author."

"Why are you sitting on his bed? Get up."

"And when I'm a famous author all the girls will run after me, and it is for me that she will say, 'Daddy, why did you take me away from him?' "

"Oh, my friend," D. said. "You're talking such nonsense."

Sahib winked at his wife. "Did you hear that? What sort of books can a person write if he thinks love and romance are nonsense?"

D. was struggling into his shirt, for he was both shy and ashamed of his undershirt, which was torn. "Yes, put on your clothes, man," Sahib urged him. "Don't show yourself before my wife. She imagines things."

"It's he," Bibiji desperately told D. "He's been imagining things—about you and her. All lies. You're a liar," she said, turning on Sahib. "And come out of his room—you shouldn't be there with your *thoughts*."

"And what about *your* thoughts?" Sahib said, enjoying the mischief rising in him. "Don't I know you have them? Haven't I been married to you for twenty years, lying next to you in bed while you had your thoughts? . . . Oh, not about me—what am I, a ruined wreck—but others, like your guest, your paying guest, a guest who pays you, what luck!"

Was there, as described in the novel, a dust storm blowing that day? It was the season of such storms—day after day of furnace heat, and then, suddenly, wildly, winds laden with the dust of the desert whirling through the city. I seem to remember returning from my teacher's house in such a storm, but it may have been that Dinesh's novel suggested it to me (for he was skilled at such effects). Wherever it came from, my memory of that scene in the Malhotra house is set within swirling columns of dust, lashing the tree outside, bending its sickly trunk, and stripping it down to the last of its dying leaves. Dust thick in my mouth, stinging my eyes, I groped my way inside. The first thing I noticed was that the windows had not been shut, so that the storm whistled around the room as freely as it did outside. It was only when I had managed to shut each window in the house that I became aware of the people in it.

They were in the living room: Bibiji on the floor, on her carpet, not as she usually sat there, singing to her harmonium, but with her knees drawn up and her face hidden in her hands. Dinesh was bending over the sofa, and he turned to me and said, "Get a doctor."

I heard Sahib groan, "Let me die," before I actually saw him laid out on the sofa.

Dinesh asked Bibiji, "Where is there a doctor nearby?" Sahib's groans of pain changed to a moan of panic: "No doctor."

"Should we let you bleed to death?" Dinesh said. Blood was seeping through Sahib's shirt and slowly spreading over his chest. His eyes were shut. His face had the pallor of a dead man's, but he was

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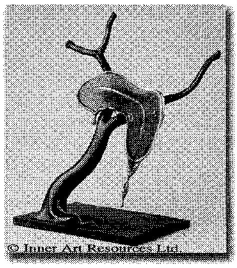

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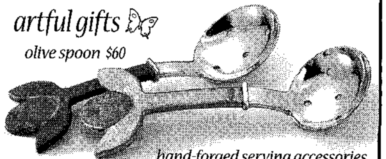

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energetic enough to insist again, "No doctor."

I went to find a sheet to tear up for a bandage. Crossing the courtyard, I saw a half-peeled potato lying on the ground, and not far away, as though it had been flung there, the knife with which it had been peeled. I picked up the knife and found that, in addition to potato peel, it had blood on it. Dinesh was calling "Hurry!," so instead of a sheet I quickly tore the top part of my sari. I helped Dinesh raise our landlord to a sitting position so that we could bandage him. Sahib groaned and cried between us, but when we asked if we were hurting him he denied it and said for the third time, "No doctor," and now Bibiji echoed him.

Her voice roused him; he became animated. "She wants me to die. . . . Why else did she murder me?"

Dinesh said to me, "What's that knife?" I had completely forgotten about it. I picked it up from where I had dropped it.

Sahib, now bandaged and prone on the sofa, said, "Get rid of the murder weapon."

Bibiji got up and took it from me. She regarded it front and back. She told Sahib, "You can say you did it yourself." She demonstrated, raising the knife toward her heart.

"Why should I wish to kill myself and not you?" Sahib said.

"People often kill themselves. You yourself, at that time, and if I hadn't found it—"

"I bought it for the rats!"

"You wrote a note." She whispered, "A suicide note. The police took it. It is in their hands."

He, too, was whispering now—out of weakness and pain, but also because that was the way they spoke to each other when they had bad things to say. "I wanted to die. This is the second time you've killed me." To Dinesh and me he said, "Yes, call the doctor. Let him fetch the police. Let them take *her* away this time."

"So, all right, I'll go," she said indifferently.

"You! As if you could stand it there. . . . Wipe the handle." She did so on a cushion, but not thoroughly, so that he said, "More, more . . . Now give it to me—don't touch it! What a fool. Hold it with your sari."

That was the way she handed it to him. He pressed his fingers around it but was too weak to hold on, and it fell to the floor. We all looked at it. No one wanted to pick it up.

At last Dinesh said, "Suicide is also considered a criminal offense."

Bibiji cried, "He didn't do anything!"

He opened his eyes. He murmured, "I tried to kill myself. I stabbed myself with a knife."

"It was I!" She turned to Dinesh. "You saw me. And you heard what he said. The lies he told about you. That's why I did it. I couldn't stand his lies." She sank to the floor. Her shoulders shook with sobs—silent ones, but they were more than her husband could bear.

He told her, "It was a joke. You know how I love to make jokes." To Dinesh he said, "Tell her the girl was nothing to you. Tell her."

Dinesh had lowered his eyes. When he spoke, he did so in the strangled voice of a truthful person making up a lie. But Sahib appeared satisfied. He said, "My poor wife. She doesn't understand that, when there is a girl, it's human nature to make jokes. Everyone does it. But really there's only one person, and when she sings and plays her harmonium—oh! oh!"

"I think he's fainted," I said, for his face was drained and he had shut his eyes again.

"No." With an effort he motioned for Dinesh to move closer. "Tell her it's true about her singing: how you love it—because it is very good and because it is she who sings." When Dinesh confirmed this in the same strangled voice as before, Sahib appeared satisfied and said nothing more.

In the novel, the husband dies in the night, and the wife goes mad with grief and remorse. But Sahib didn't die, and Bibiji didn't go mad. Instead, she proved herself very practical. It was she who nursed him and dressed his wound every day. I tore up the rest of my saris, and Dinesh and I rolled them into bandages. We never called a doctor. The only person to help us was Gochi, who brought an herbal ointment that helped to heal the wound. She asked no questions at all; she was probably familiar with difficult, even violent family situations and was more knowing than the rest of us.

But we, too, had learned to be less innocent. Since it was necessary to find a new tenant for Kay's room, we took care that it should be not a young but a middle-aged lady who moved in with us. Shortly afterward, Dinesh asked for a transfer to his home town (he said that his family needed him), and, to replace him, I found another, even older lady, whom I had met at my teacher's house. Bibiji began to cook for her paying guests, which increased her income. The Malhotras no longer ate alone behind the closed door but sat together with their boarders on the living-room carpet to eat in the traditional way, with their fingers from little bowls. Sometimes Bibiji took out her harmonium, though more rarely now, and her songs were no longer ambiguous but definitely spiritual. The visits to my teacher's house became less satisfying to me. Also, I missed Dinesh. Soon after he left for Kanpur, I, too, decided to go home.

In my farewell letter to him, I described the new household: "Sometimes the three ladies are all sad together, so I guess they are telling one another their troubles. Gochi squats nearby, drinking tea and contributing her own comments on life's vicissitudes. I can't always understand what they are saying, and I'm beginning to think that you're right and that instead of struggling with the Upanishads, etc., I'd have done better to learn more Hindi. I can just see your face—you're thinking, Ah-ha, she's had enough at last of our ancient wisdom. But it's only that it's difficult for me to think of everything in the world, including ourselves, as merely an illusion. I don't think human misery is an illusion, and, rather than go into total denial about it, I'd like to learn of some ways to deal with it. I've found out that there's a Buddhist teaching center in Connecticut, not far from my parents' house. So now, if you like, you can think of me with my head shaved, wearing a Buddhist robe instead of my saris. In any case, as you know, I don't have any saris left—they've all been rolled into bandages. But I'm definitely going to learn Hindi, so that I can translate your novel. As Kay would say, 'Am I in it?' And the Malhotras? And Kay herself, so fatefully combing her hair?" ♦

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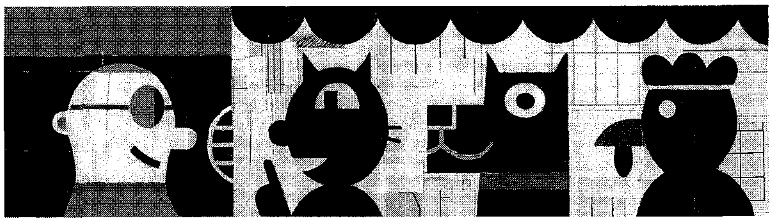


BOOKS

ACID REDUX

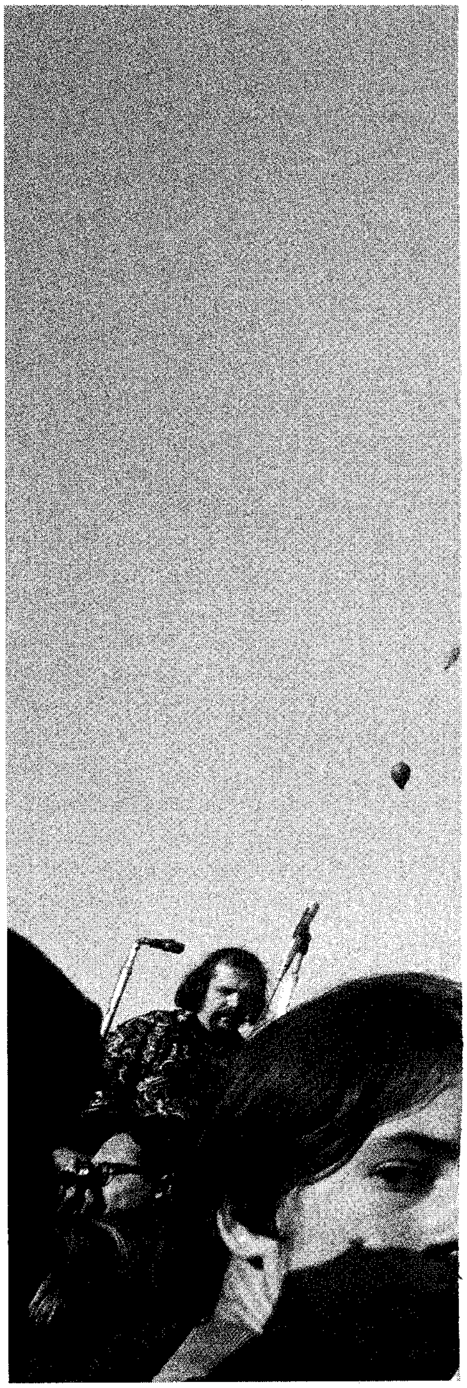
The life and high times of Timothy Leary.

BY LOUIS MENAND

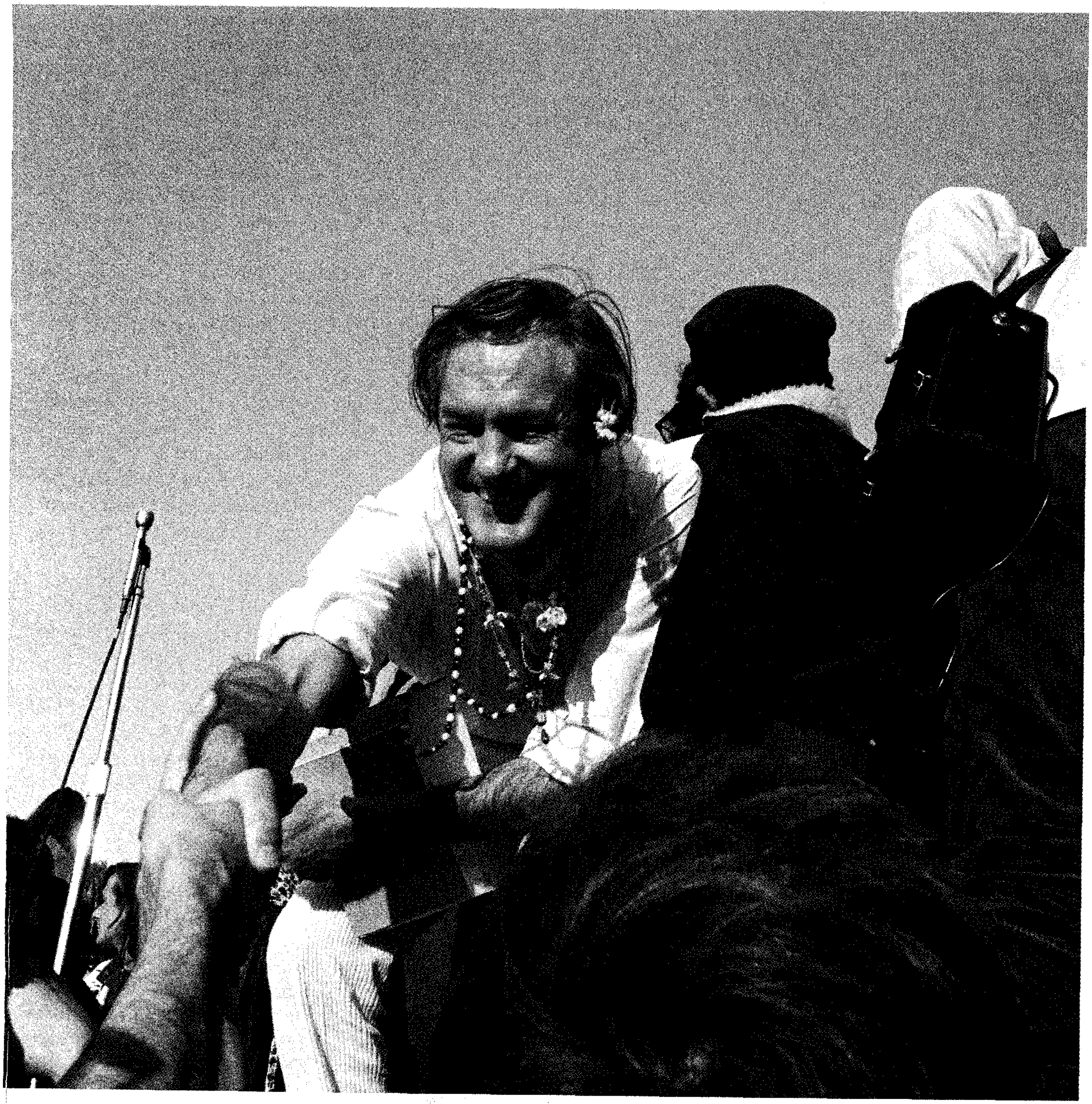
The good Lord—or maybe it was natural selection, but, when you look at the outcome, how plausible is that, really?—gave us, in addition to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, the fantastic variety of fungi with which we share this awesome planet: yeasts, rusts, mildews, mushrooms, and molds. Among them is ergot, a fungus that destroys cereal grasses, particularly rye, and that, when eaten, can cause hallucinations. Ergot is the natural source of lysergic acid, from which lysergic acid diethylamide is readily synthesized—LSD. What purpose, divine or adaptive, this substance might serve was once the subject of a learned debate that engaged scientists, government officials, psychiatrists, intellectuals, and a few gold-plated egomaniacs. Timothy Leary was one of the egomaniacs.

Leary belonged to what we reverently refer to as the Greatest Generation, that cohort of Americans who eluded most of the deprivations of the Depression, grew fat in the affluence of the postwar years, and then preached hedonism and truancy to the baby-boom generation, which has taken the blame ever since. Great Ones, we salute you! Leary was born in 1920, in Springfield, Massachusetts, which is also the home town of Dr. Seuss, of whose most famous creation Leary was in many respects the human analogue—a grinning, charismatic, completely irresponsible Lord of Misrule. Leary's father was a dentist whose career was ruined by alcoholism; he abandoned the family in 1934, ending up as a steward in the merchant marine. Leary's mother was a fierce guardian of her son's interests, which required a considerable amount of guarding. Leary was intelligent, and he did not lack ambition, but—as Robert Greenfield meticulously documents in his exhaustive biography, "Timothy Leary" (Harcourt; $28)—his education was a game of chutes and ladders: Holy Cross (where he came near to flunking out after two years), West Point (from which he was obliged to withdraw after being charged with a violation of the honor code), the University of Alabama (from which he was expelled for spending a night in the women's dorm), the University of Illinois (from which he was drafted into the Army, where he served in a clinic for the rehabilitation of the deaf, in Pennsylvania), Alabama again (which he talked his way back into and from which he finally graduated, by taking correspondence courses), Washington State University (where he got a master's degree), and, with the help of the G.I. Bill (a welfare fund for Great Ones), Berkeley, from which, now married and with two children, he received a Ph.D. in psychology, in 1950.

There was no more opportune moment to become a psychologist. Psychology in the nineteen-fifties played the role for many people that genetics does today. "It's all in your head" has the same appeal as "It's all in the genes": an explanation for the way things are that does not threaten the way things are. Why should someone feel unhappy or engage in antisocial behavior when that person is living in the freest and most prosperous nation on earth? It can't be the system! There must be a flaw in the wiring somewhere. So the postwar years were a slack time for political activism and a boom time for psychiatry. The National Institute of Mental Health, founded in 1946, became the fastest-growing of the seven divisions of the National Institutes of Health, awarding psychologists grants to study problems like alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, and television violence. Ego psychology, a therapy aimed at helping people adapt and adjust, was the



Leary at the "Human Be-In," a rally of a



nty thousand people at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, January 14, 1967. Photograph by Dennis Hopper.

dominant school in American psychoanalysis. By 1955, half of the hospital beds in the United States were occupied by patients diagnosed as mentally ill.

The belief that deviance and dissent could be "cured" by a little psychiatric social work ("This boy don't need a judge—he needs an analyst's care!") is consistent with our retrospective sense of the nineteen-fifties as an age of conformity. The darker version—argued, for example, by Eli Zaretsky in his valuable cultural history of psychoanalysis, "Secrets of the Soul"—is that psychiatry became one of the instruments of soft coercion which liberal societies use to keep their citizens in line. But, as Zaretsky also points out, leading critics of conformity and normalcy—Herbert Marcuse, Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Norman O. Brown, Paul Goodman, Wilhelm Reich—thought that it was all in the head, too. For them, normalcy was the neurosis, for which they prescribed various means of personal liberation, from better drugs to better orgasms. In the early years of the Cold War, personal radicalism, revolution in the head and in the bed, was the safer radicalism. The political kind could get you blacklisted.

Leary spent the first part of his career doing normative psychology, the work of assessment, measurement, and control; he spent the second as one of the leading proselytizers of alternative psychology, the pop psychology of consciousness expansion and nonconformity. But one enterprise was the flip side of the other, and Greenfield's conclusion, somewhat sorrowfully reached, is that Leary was never serious about either. The only things Leary was serious about were pleasure and renown. He underwent no fundamental transformation when he left the academic world for the counterculture. He liked women, he liked being the center of attention, and he liked to get high. He simply changed the means of intoxication. Like many people in those days, he started out on Burgundy but soon hit the harder stuff.

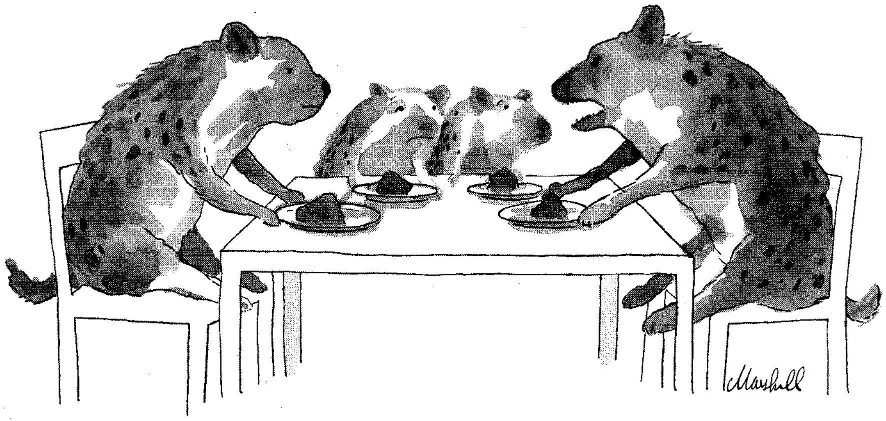
The popular conception of Leary is that he was a distinguished academic who went off the deep end, a Harvard professor who blew his mind. For obvious reasons, this account suited Leary, and even Greenfield refers to him repeatedly as a Harvard professor (as does the Columbia Encyclopædia). Leary did teach at Harvard, but was not a professor. He began his career at Kaiser Permanente Hospital in Oakland, where he was the director of clinical research and psychology. His early work involved personality tests; his first book, "The Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality," came out in 1957. It was a success, but, Greenfield says, some of Leary's colleagues felt that he had failed to credit their research. Even then, he seems to have been blessed with an incapacity for shame, a gift for which he had many occasions to be thankful.

Leary had already had a bad run of personal troubles. His first wife had committed suicide on his thirty-fifth birthday. (When she complained, during a night of heavy drinking, about his having a mistress, he is supposed to have said, "That's your problem.") Leary then married the mistress, but, soon afterward, he struck her, the landlady called the cops, and the marriage ended. In 1956, Leary's father, with whom he had just reconnected, died, destitute, in New York City. Soon after, a former faculty adviser, a married man with whom Greenfield believes Leary was having a sexual affair, was arrested while cruising a public men's room, and Leary had a nervous breakdown. He travelled to Europe, where he met David McClelland, the director of the Center for Personality Research at Harvard, who was on a sabbatical. McClelland was trying to start a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology, and, impressed by Leary's charm and intelligence, he offered him a lectureship for the 1959-60 academic year. Leary accepted, and moved to Cambridge. At the end of the year, McClelland advised him to cultivate a less cavalier notion of science, but he renewed Leary's appointment. That summer, Leary went to Mexico, and there, for the first time, he ate some "magic mushrooms." He found the experience entirely enchanting, and when he returned to Cambridge he set up, with McClelland's approval, the Harvard Psychedelic Project.

The hallucinogen obtained from Mexican mushrooms is psilocybin, and in 1960 psilocybin was not illegal. Neither was LSD, which Leary tried for the first time in late 1961. Both were manufactured by Sandoz Laboratories, in Switzerland, and were readily available to researchers. It seemed to almost everyone who encountered them that substances so potent must have a use. Hence the Harvard project, a latecomer to organized efforts to determine what God had in mind when he designed those curious fungi.

The great hippie drug was introduced into American life by the suits: the medical profession and the federal government. Beginning in the early nineteen-fifties, the military and the C.I.A. had hopes that LSD could serve as either a truth serum or an instrument of mind control, and, according to Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain's history of the drug, "Acid Dreams," they used it often, both operationally, during interrogations, and experimentally, frequently with unwitting subjects. Clinical psychologists (many funded by government agencies) regarded psychedelics as psychotomimetics: their effects appeared to mimic psychotic states, and they were used to study psychosis and schizophrenia.

LSD was also administered to alcoholics, drug addicts, and patients with emotional blockages. The most famous of these patients was Cary Grant, who took LSD under the supervision of a psychiatrist. "All my life, I've been searching for peace of mind," Grant said. "Nothing really seemed to give me what I wanted until this treatment." Allen Ginsberg was introduced to LSD at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, in 1959, where his responses were measured by a team of doctors as part of a federally funded research program. Ginsberg eventually became one of the chief publicists for LSD, along with Ken Kesey, who first used it at the Veterans Hospital in Menlo Park, in 1960, where, in another federally funded program, he was paid seventy-five dollars a day to ingest hallucinogens. The experience led to Kesey's first novel, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," and, later on, to the Merry Pranksters, the subject of Tom Wolfe's book "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test." (Wolfe, who reluctantly tried LSD out of journalistic scruple, recalled, "I had the feeling that I had entered into the sheen of this nubby twist carpet—a really wretched carpet, made of Acrilan—and somehow this represented the people of America, in their democratic glory.") Alan Watts, whose book "The Joyous Cosmology" was published in 1962 and became, as Greenfield says, "the model for the psychedelic experience for millions of people," first took LSD in a program at U.C.L.A. It seems like quackery now, but Lee and Shlain say that between 1949 and 1959 a thousand pa-



"I don't care what they scavenge at Kevin's."

pers on LSD were published in professional journals.

While he was at Harvard, Leary did experiments that involved, for example, giving psychedelic drugs to prison inmates in an attempt to reduce recidivism rates; Leary claimed that the program was remarkably successful, though Greenfield says that the numbers Leary gave to support his claim don't add up. But what really attracted Leary was an altogether different theory about the purpose of psychedelics. This was the theory that they were designed to reveal to mankind the true nature of the universe, and its leading exponent was Aldous Huxley. Huxley had taken mescaline, a drug derived from the peyote cactus, in 1953, under the guidance of a British medical psychiatrist named Humphry Osmond. (It was Osmond who coined the term psychedelic, which means "mind-manifesting.") In 1954, Huxley published a short book about the experience, "The Doors of Perception" (from which the rock group later took its name). He had his first LSD experience in 1955; it provided him, he wrote, with "the direct, total awareness, from the inside, so to say, of Love as the primary and fundamental cosmic fact."

After his experience with Mexican mushrooms, Leary read "The Doors of Perception" with excitement. This was a style of mystico-pseudoscience that suited him perfectly, a kind of shamanistic psychology delightfully immune to empirical challenges. As it happened, Huxley was then lecturing at M.I.T., and Leary arranged a meeting. They had lunch at the Harvard Faculty Club, which was, and remains, the unlikeliest venue in which to plan the future of a psychedelic movement. But that is what Leary and Huxley did. Huxley's idea was that, if the world's leaders could be turned on, the lion would lie down with the lamb, and peace would be at hand. The vision was appealing to Leary. It was, after all, simply psychiatric social work on a global scale, and administered not to convicts and juvenile delinquents but to the political, social, and artistic élites—much more fun. The person Leary eventually teamed up with in the business of spreading acid illumination was not Huxley, who died in 1963, on the day President Kennedy was assassinated; it was Ginsberg, a man who took pride in knowing the address and phone number of everyone who mattered in the cultural world. Turning important people on was their mission.

The Harvard Psychedelic Project started going off the rails in early 1962. Self-administered drug use seems to have been the principal form of research. "A bunch of guys standing around in a narrow hallway saying 'Wow' " is the way one participant later described the scene. Leary and his colleagues were confronted, at a faculty meeting, with charges that drugs were being administered to subjects without medical supervision, and a report about the meeting appeared in the student newspaper. The story was picked up in the national press, which led the F.D.A. to start regulating the use of psychedelics. Leary was compelled to turn over his supply of psilocybin to the university health service, and the project was shut down. But rumors began circulating that Harvard undergraduates were dropping acid, and at the end of the 1962-63 academic year Leary's appointment was not renewed. This was for the official and sufficient reason that he had stopped meeting with his classes. He had gone to California: he told his secretary to hand out a reading list and then dismiss the students.

Leary was not, technically, fired, but his Psychedelic Project sidekick Richard Alpert was. Alpert was a Harvard assistant professor from a very wealthy family; he owned a Mercedes, an M.G., a sailboat, and a Cessna (and this was at a time when most assistant professors at Harvard could barely afford the Cessna). He was charged with giving LSD to a male undergraduate—according to Greenfield, in exchange for sexual favors. Alpert's story generated huge publicity, from which Leary, whose case was relatively mundane, benefitted. Both men wisely adopted the pose that they were better off without Harvard, and articles featuring them appeared in *Look*, *Esquire*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *Times Magazine*. They became famous as the two Harvard professors—geniuses? rogues? who knew?—who had been fired for being too far-out. A large and undiscriminating audience for things far-out was just around the historical corner, and it was an audience for whom being kicked out of Harvard was evidence of righteousness. Leary managed to stay on its stage for about six years before the law caught up with him.

Leary's immortal message to this audience—"Turn on, tune in, and drop out"—was quickly picked up on and widely pastiched. Greenfield cites a commercial for Squirt: "Turn on to flavor, tune in to sparkle, and drop out of the cola rut." This is not very surprising, for a couple of reasons. One is that in the mid-nineteen-sixties the language of commercial culture was drug vernacular. Almost everything advertised itself as the moral, legal, and sensory equivalent of a drug experience, from pop music to evangelism. (Billy Graham: "Turn on Christ, tune in to the Bible, and drop out of sin.") All sorts of products claimed to turn you on, get you high, blow your mind. But the other reason Leary's phrase was adopted as an advertising slogan is that it was designed to *be* an advertising slogan. The inspiration came from a fellow pop visionary, Marshall McLuhan. In 1966, McLuhan and Leary had lunch at the Plaza Hotel in New York City; there, in Leary's account, the media-wise McLuhan offered the following counsel:

> The key to your work is advertising. You're promoting a product. The new and improved accelerated brain. You must use the most current tactics for arousing consumer interest. Associate LSD with all the good things that the brain can produce—beauty, fun, philosophic wonder, religious revelation, increased intelligence, mystical romance. Word of mouth from satisfied consumers will help, but get your rock and roll friends to write jingles about the brain.

Also:

> Wave reassuringly. Radiate courage. Never complain or appear angry. It's okay if you come off as flamboyant and eccentric. You're a professor, after all. But a confident attitude is the best advertisement. You must be known for your smile.

Whether or not McLuhan ever uttered these precepts, they guided Leary for the rest of his public life. He was a counterculture salesman, and he wore, on every occasion, the same blissed-out smile, a rictus somewhere between a beatific, what-me-worry grin and a movie star's frozen stare into the flashbulbs. One of his ex-wives described it as "the smile of the ego actually eating the personality."

Leary's "drop out" advice is one of those things which give historians the illusion that mass behaviors are driven by popular ideas, when it is usually the case that ideas are made popular by mass behaviors already under way. Because of the spike in the birth rate that began in 1946, the number of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds in the United States grew from fifteen million in 1955 to twenty-five million in 1970; during the sixties, college enrollment more than doubled, from three and a half million students to just under eight million. Times were prosperous; these were the "go-go" years on Wall Street, the era of guns and butter, Vietnam and the Great Society. Government spending primed the pump. Young people dropped out because dropping out was economically sustainable, and because there were more of them in the pipeline than the system could absorb. The phenomenon was more complicated, of course—social systems don't self-regulate quite so tidily—but young people found it natural to renounce grownup ambitions in the nineteen-sixties, and they got their mantras from grownups like Leary.

Leary unveiled his slogan at a conference on LSD at Berkeley, in 1966. (Possessing LSD was still not illegal, although its unauthorized manufacture had just become a misdemeanor.) He was on the crest of his personal wave. After leaving Harvard, Leary and Alpert had tried to set up shop at a hotel near Acapulco, where they explored the religious potential of psychedelics and offered customers an experience in transcendental living, but the Mexican government had them deported. They were rescued by a wealthy young stockbroker named Billy Hitchcock, who made available his family's twenty-five-hundred-acre estate, Millbrook, in Dutchess County, two hours north of New York City. Millbrook became the scene of an extended countercultural happening, a place where dozens of residents (many of them with children, who were fed drugs as well) and a changing cast of visitors engaged in chanting, meditation, sex games, and psychedelic-drug consumption, with Leary and his third wife, Nena von Schlebrugge (later the mother of Uma Thurman), and fourth wife, Rosemary Woodruff, presiding. The god Krishna enjoyed an unexpected surge in prayers directed his way from upstate New York, and the Beatles were on the record-player twenty-four hours a day. At one point, the Merry Pranksters' bus pulled in, with Neal Cassady, the male muse of the Beats and the hero of "On the Road," at the wheel. But the Pranksters were accustomed to horsing around with Hell's Angels; they had little patience for spaced-out peaceniks, and the visit went badly. Bummer.

By this time, Leary had confected a science of psychedelics, which he laid out in a long interview in *Playboy*, billed as "a candid conversation with the controversial ex-Harvard professor." LSD, Leary explained, puts the user in touch with his or her own ancestral past and with the genetic memory of all life forms, which is encoded in each person's genes. In a psychedelic future, Leary explained, "each person will become his own Buddha, his own Einstein, his own Galileo. Instead of relying on canned, static, dead knowledge passed on from other symbol producers, he will be using his span of eighty or so years on this planet to live out every possibility of the human, prehuman, and even subhuman adventure." The interviewer, an admirable straight man, asked whether this meant that time travel was possible. Leary allowed that it was:

> LEARY: That happens to be the particular project that I've been working on most recently with LSD. I've charted my own family tree and traced it back as far as I can. I've tried to plumb the gene pools from which my ancestors emerged in Ireland and France.
>
> PLAYBOY: With what success?

Being your own Einstein sounds pretty cool; still, the magazine's readers probably felt that other uses of LSD mentioned by Leary spoke more directly to their immediate concerns.

> LEARY: An enormous amount of energy from every fiber of your body is released under LSD—most especially including sexual energy. There is no question that LSD is the most powerful aphrodisiac ever discovered by man.
>
> PLAYBOY: Would you elaborate?

But the seeds of destruction were already planted. Leary had been arrested in 1965, in Laredo, Texas, on federal marijuana charges. At the trial, he asserted his First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion, an argument that the judge, Ben Connally, the brother of John Connally, the governor of Texas, undoubtedly took into account in handing down a thirty-year sentence. Still, the trial was good for publicity. Greenfield says that in the hundred and eight days after the verdict the *Times* ran eighty-one articles about LSD.

Leary remained free on appeal, but, meanwhile, the activities at Millbrook had attracted the attention of local law enforcement. Leary's chief nemesis there was the assistant district attorney for Dutchess County, G. Gordon Liddy, who staged a raid on the house, and had Leary arrested on marijuana-possession charges. Then, in 1968, Leary was pulled over while driving through Laguna Beach and, along with his wife and children, arrested again after drugs were found in the car. Leary's son, Jack, was so stoned that he took off his clothes in the booking room and started masturbating. When he was shown what his son was doing, Leary laughed. Rosemary was sentenced to six months, Jack was ordered to undergo psychiatric observation, and Leary got one to ten for possession of marijuana.

He was sent to the California Men's Colony Prison in San Luis Obispo, and this is where the story turns completely Alice in Wonderland. Assisted by the Weathermen, Leary escapes from prison and is taken to a safe house, where he meets with the kingpins of the radical underground—Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Mark Rudd. With their help, he and Rosemary (in violation of her probation) are smuggled out of the country and flown to Algiers, where Leary is the house guest of Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Panthers' minister of defense. Cleaver would seem to be Leary's type, since his book "Soul on Ice" contains such sentences as "The quest for the Apocalyptic Fusion will find optimal conditions only in a Classless Society, the absence of classes being the *sine qua non* for the existence of a Unitary Society in which the Unitary Sexual Image can be achieved" and (to explain why white women want black men) "What wets the Ultrafeminine's juice is that she is allured and tortured by the secret, intuitive knowledge that he, her psychic bridegroom, can blaze through the wall of her ice, plumb her psychic depths, test of the oil of her soul, melt the iceberg of

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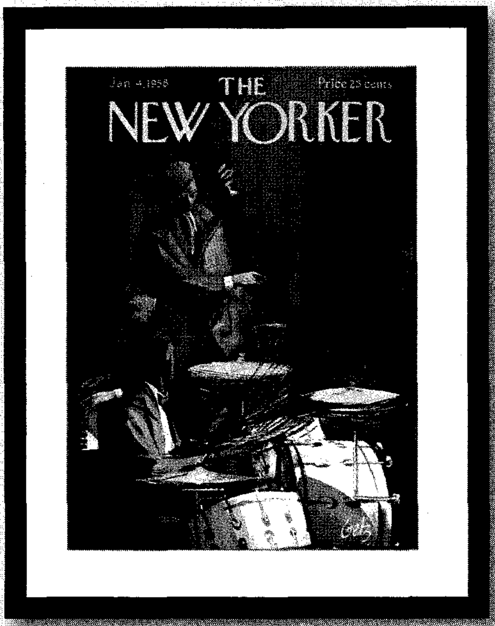
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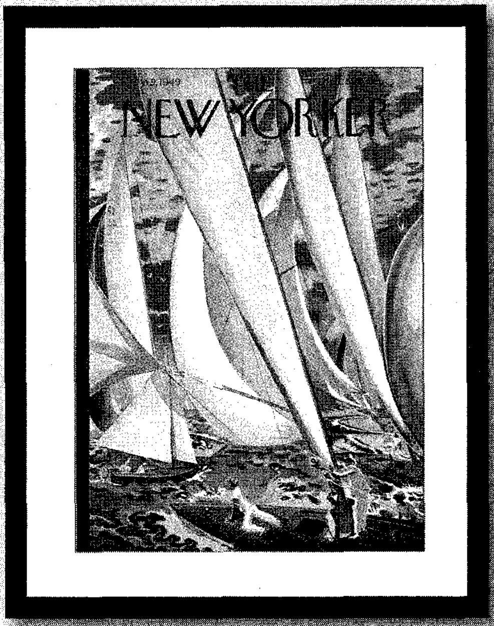
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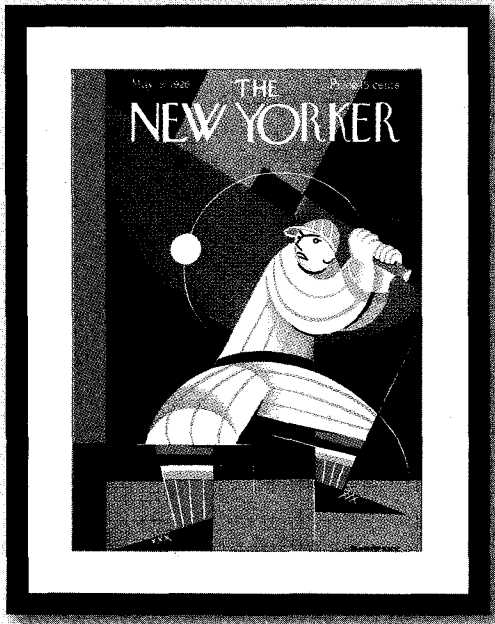
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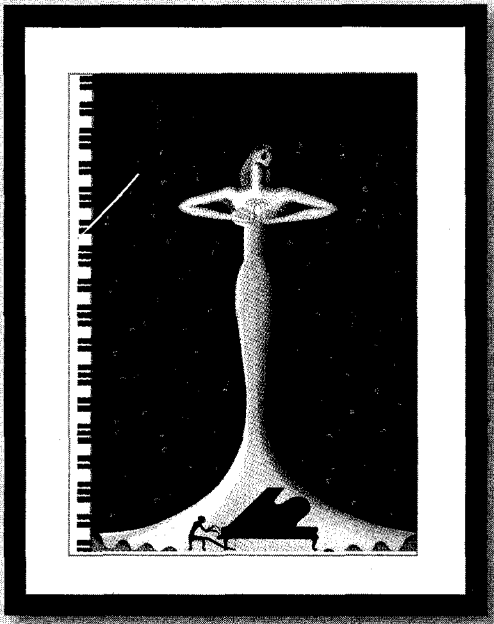

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CARTOON BANK

her brain, touch her inner sanctum, detonate the bomb of her orgasm, and bring her sweet release." But, alas, the visionaries do not get along.

Though the Panthers hold a press conference in New York to announce that Leary, formerly contemptuous of politics, has joined the revolution—Leary's new slogan: "Shoot to Live/Aim for Life"—Cleaver is eager to get him out of Algeria, an Islamic country not exactly soft on drugs. He begins to harass Leary and his wife, and they manage to get to Switzerland. There Leary meets a high-flying international arms dealer named Michel Hauchard, who agrees to protect him in exchange for thirty per cent of the royalties from books that Leary agrees to write, and then has Leary arrested, on the theory that he is more likely to produce the books in jail, where there is less to distract him. Thanks to his wife's exertions, Leary is released after a month in solitary, but she leaves him. He takes up with a Swiss girl, and begins using heroin, then meets a jet-setter named Joanna Harcourt-Smith Tamabacopoulos D'Amecourt, who becomes his new consort.

Leary's visa is expiring, so he and Joanna seek refuge in Austria, where Leary issues a statement that Austria "for us personally and I think for the world at large exists as a beacon of compassion and freedom." (Half of all Nazi concentration-camp guards were from Austria.) It is not clear that Austria feels equally warmly about Leary, and, after Leary's son-in-law shows up, a plan is hatched to go to Afghanistan, where there are friends among the hashish suppliers. Leary flies to Kabul—it is now January, 1973—and is immediately busted. The son-in-law, it turns out, had set him up. Leary is flown to Los Angeles in the custody of an agent of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and remanded to Folsom Prison, where he is put in the cell next to Charles Manson's. King Kong meets Godzilla.

The rest is bathos. The United States Supreme Court had thrown out the Laredo conviction, but Leary clearly faced major jail time. He met the problem head on: he coöperated fully with the authorities and informed on all his old associates, including his lawyers and his former wife Rosemary, who had gone underground. Leary also wrote articles for *National Review*, William F. Buckley's magazine, in which he attacked John Lennon and Bob Dylan ("plastic protest songs to a barbiturate beat"), in order to demonstrate that he was rehabilitated. When he was released, in 1976, he was placed in the Witness Protection Program. He eventually made his way to Los Angeles, where he thrived in a B-list Hollywood social scene. Larry Flynt, the publisher of *Hustler*, was a friend, and Leary became a regular contributor to the magazine. He was also a welcome guest at the Playboy Mansion, and he went on the road "debating" his former adversary Gordon Liddy. His new promotion was space migration. He fell out of touch with his son; his daughter committed suicide, in 1990. He died, of prostate cancer, in 1996.

The best that can be said about Greenfield's biography of Leary is that it will never be necessary to write another one. Greenfield spent a long time with his subject; they first met in Algiers in 1970, when Leary was a guest of the Panthers. He has been thorough, but not efficient. It is good that he interviewed many of the survivors of those years; it is not so good that he let them ramble on unedited in his text. Oral history is an unreliable genre to begin with; in an era when most of the witnesses were intoxicated much of the time, the quotient of credibility that attaches to their anecdotes is low. The job of the historian is to select and condense. Also, to tell a story.

Greenfield's Leary is a heartless and damaged man. The portrait is convincing. Still, people did find him magnetic—not only beautiful women but colleagues and fellow-celebrities. He was obviously reckless, fatuous, exasperating, and full of himself, but people liked him, and they liked being around him. The career that Leary's most resembles is that of another renegade psychologist, Wilhelm Reich, whose orgone box—meant to accumulate the energies of the cosmic life force—was a fad among enlightened people in the nineteen-fifties. Norman Mailer used an orgone box; so did Dwight Macdonald and Saul Bellow.

In the early days, LSD, too, was an élite drug. Many people unconnected with the counterculture "experimented" with it: Henry Luce and his wife, Clare Boothe Luce, were enthusiasts. (Mrs. Luce thought that LSD ought to be kept out of the hands of ordinary people. "We wouldn't want everyone doing too much of a good thing," she said.) Leary administered psilocybin to the founder of Grove Press, Barney Rosset, who didn't like it ("I pay my psychiatrist fifty dollars an hour to keep this from happening to me," he complained). Psychedelics were tried by Lenny Bruce, Groucho Marx, and Arthur Koestler ("I solved the secret of the universe last night, but this morning I forgot what it was," he said). Leary, in accordance with Huxley's policy, would have been happy to restrict the use of psychedelics to people like these and to administer them in controlled environments, but at a certain point psychedelics got onto the street, and he found himself preaching to kids. The popularization of LSD wasn't Leary's doing; it was the music's. When he finished listening to "Sgt. Pepper's" for the first time, at Millbrook in 1967, Leary is supposed to have stood up and announced, "My work is finished." Psychedelia had become a fashion.

It didn't last long. Congress made the sale of LSD a felony and possession a misdemeanor in 1968, and handed regulation over to the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. In 1970, psychedelic drugs were classified as drugs of abuse, with no medical value. Scientific reports circulated that LSD caused genetic damage; recreational drug use began to acquire a negative aura. And after 1968 the economy began to tighten. It was the Nixon recession; people were anxious about moving on with their careers. Getting wasted was for losers. And where were all those great insights, anyway? Huxley probably believed that LSD provided a window onto the hidden essence of things as a matter of conviction, and Leary probably believed it as a matter of convenience. But the LSD experience is completely suggestible. People on the drug see and feel what they expect to see and feel, or what they have been told they will see and feel. If they expect that the secret of the universe will be revealed to them, then that's what they will find. An illusion, no doubt, but it's as close as we're likely to get. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Life Stories

Song for My Fathers, *by Tom Sancton (Other Press; $24.95).* When Sancton's father, a former editor at *The New Republic*, returned to the South to write novels, he instilled in his son a passion for jazz, taking him along to listen in—even on school nights—at Allan and Sandy Jaffe's Preservation Hall, in New Orleans. In time, Sancton started playing jazz himself. (A clarinettist, he included among his mentors George Lewis and Punch Miller.) This jazz memoir's straightforward style has the virtue of allowing the musicians to speak for themselves. The book is a mirror for their private tribulations, and also for public ones: as a teen-ager at a Tulane frat party, Sancton watched, ashamed, as an all-black local band was told to play "Dixie." A moving introduction explains that this memoir was written before Hurricane Katrina; much of what Sancton lovingly depicts has now vanished in space as well as time.

But Enough About Me, *by Jancee Dunn (HarperCollins; $24.95).* Dunn grew up culturally bereft in the nineteen-eighties, but parlayed a modest knowledge of pop music into a job at *Rolling Stone*. After establishing her bona fides as a square, she devotes her memoir to an inside look at being a celebrity journalist and the eventual toll this takes on her soul. The chapters alternate between entertaining set pieces—peeking into Madonna's bathroom, being given Velveeta cheese by Dolly Parton (Dunn still has it in her freezer), turning down a rocker's offer of heroin—and considerations of what it means to be an aging rock chick. Dunn tells her story in the brisk prose of a magazine profile, and, in keeping with her memoir's title, she goes easy on personal matters, apparently preferring to show the life of a celebrity interviewer refracted through the lives she writes about.

An American Heroine in the French Resistance, *edited by Judy Barrett Litoff (Fordham; $29.95).* In 1937, Virginia Roush, a strong-minded young woman from St. Petersburg, Florida, married a Frenchman, becoming Virginia d'Albert-Lake, and moved to Paris. During the war, she kept a diary, including almost larkish reports of her Resistance work. Part of an escape line that smuggled downed Allied airmen out of the country, she took them on secret sightseeing tours of Paris. In June, 1944, she was arrested by the Germans and sent to a sequence of concentration camps that included three spells in Ravensbrück. (The third time she was transferred from Ravensbrück, she weighed seventy-six pounds.) This book, comprising a diary written before her capture and a memoir written after her liberation, is an indelible portrait of extraordinary strength of character. In the diary she seems naïve and spirited; in the memoir she is sombre, reflective, and attentive to every detail.

Adventures of a Hollywood Secretary, *edited and annotated by Cari Beauchamp (University of California; $19.95).* In 1924, Valeria Beletti, a twenty-six-year-old from New Jersey, moved to Los Angeles and got a job as the personal secretary to the studio head Samuel Goldwyn. In spare moments, she wrote a series of chatty, heartfelt letters to a friend back home. She describes Goldwyn's mercurial temper; encounters with stars like Valentino and the young Ronald Colman; gossip about Charlie Chaplin and Marion Davies; the traumatic arrival of sound; and her own success in bringing a handsome young actor named Gary Cooper to the studio's attention. A mass of satisfying detail about early Hollywood suggests that essential features haven't changed much. "I know you would enjoy these people," Beletti tells her friend, "even though you have to more or less overlook their moral characters."

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THE ART WORLD

YOUNG AT HEART

Dada at MOMA.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

What was Dada? What it still is: a word—"hobbyhorse," in French. Baby talk. Supposedly plucked at random from a dictionary by a coterie of war-evading young writers and artists in Zurich in 1916, "dada" was a two-syllable nonsense poem and a craftily meaningless slogan, signalling a rejection of grownup seriousness at a time when grownups by the million were shooting one another to pieces on the Western Front for reasons that rang ever more hollow. Reason itself was made the scapegoat. "Let us try for once not to be right," the group's most influential founder, the Romanian poet Tristan Tzara, urged in a quieter passage of one of his careening manifestos. Dada spread like a chain letter among disaffected bohemians after the war. Wired to self-destruct—"The true Dadas are against Dada," Tzara enjoined—it was over by 1924, succeeded by imperatives, like those of Surrealism and Constructivism, to be revolutionary in more focussed, even grownup, ways. It wasn't much of an art movement, though "Dada," an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, tries hard to make it seem so. (The show originated at the Pompidou Center, in Paris, where it was larger and far more literary in emphasis.) Dada was a publicity movement.

It revelled in novel styles and in popular media—Cubist and Futurist pastiche, collage, assemblage, film, theatre, photography, noise music, sound poetry, puppetry, wild typography, magazines—basically for the hell of it, despite the odd skew, mostly in seething postwar Germany, toward political agitation. Some forms, such as abstraction and machine aesthetics, informed later art; but, as a phenomenon, Dada foretold nothing so much as the marketing of youth fashions. Though hardly commercial, it anticipated a byword of modern advertising: forget the steak, sell the sizzle. The first artist who springs to mind when Dada is mentioned, Marcel Duchamp, would constitute an exception, but he really wasn't a Dadaist. He had already conceived many of his signature "readymades"—common objects, such as a bottle rack and a snow shovel, presented as art—and his magnum opus, "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even," was under way before he had heard of the movement. Apart from accessory japes, like the mustachioed "Mona Lisa" (1919), his relations with Dada were more diplomatic than creative. A vital order of business, in clarifying Dada, is to pry Duchamp from its clutch.

The show is an elliptical tale of six cities: Zurich, where the leading artist was the collagist and sculptor Hans Arp; Cologne, the base of the Surrealist-to-be Max Ernst; Berlin, featuring the satirists George Grosz and Otto Dix; Hannover, the home of the single most substantial artist to emerge from Dada, Kurt Schwitters; Paris, dominated by the poets, in particular André Breton, who would exterminate Dada by folding it into Surrealism; and New York, where the wartime presence of Duchamp, and of the Parisian playboy genius and Dadaist par excellence Francis Picabia and the native prodigy Man Ray, anchored a sparkling salon. (Several figures adorned more than one scene. Arp pops up in Cologne, Hannover, and Paris.) Among a cast of dozens are many who achieved immortality in the brief heat of the movement's heyday, such as the German polemicist Richard Huelsenbeck, who later became a New York psychiatrist, and others who were just passing through, like the glamorous scamp and potter Beatrice Wood. Collagists abound. The quickest technical route to righteous Dadaism was to snip out printed images and compose them to comic, politically rhetorical, or naughty effect. Such things often have a quality at once piquant and jaded, like the morning-after detritus of what must have been a swell party. Schwitters's formally rigorous collages of everyday trash—

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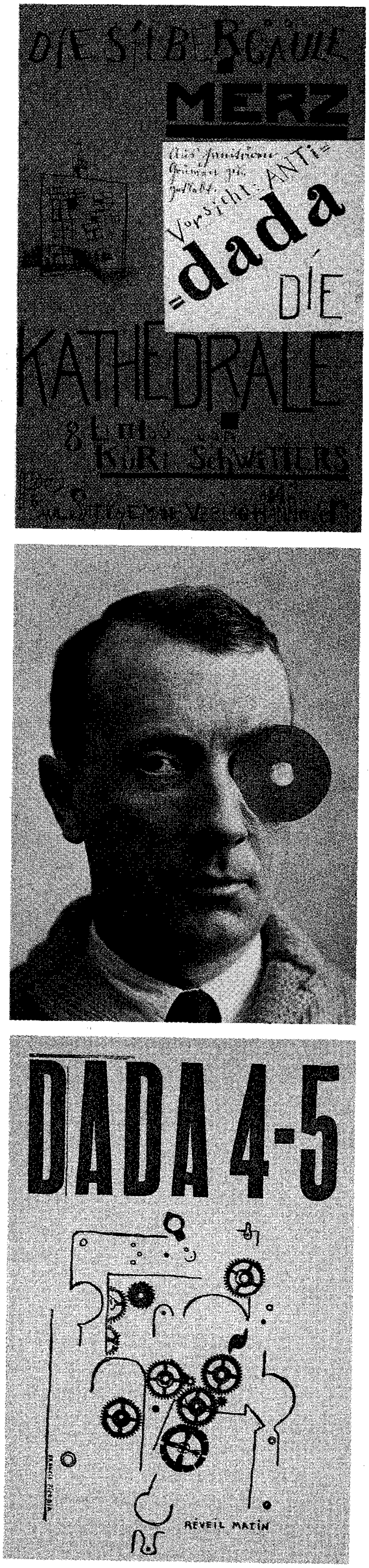
newspaper fragments, bus tickets—are something more. Schwitters, who was also an innovative poet and a pioneer of installation art, developed an anti-conventional aesthetic that proved endlessly fecund—blooming, for example, in Robert Rauschenberg's "Combines" of the nineteen-fifties.

Dada did not attract artists who earnestly practiced straight painting and sculpture. Most works in those mediums in the MOMA show are mediocre—including Picabia's, though his paintings of mechanical forms laced with wordplay and sexual innuendo can seem deliberately nugatory, razzing the very notion of quality. Picabia, a rich heir with a weakness for fast cars, was seriously unserious, playing—and living—out a Rabelaisian afflatus of all-around ridicule. (If you yearn to be a Dadaist, ask yourself each morning what Picabia would *do*.) Man Ray's amateurish paintings, superb photographs, and gamy found-object pieces similarly strike notes of the right (that is, the wrong) stuff. The show's main picture-maker is the prolific, personally magnetic, opportunistic Ernst, whose tidily irrational drawings, collages, and paintings of the era—essentially superficial glosses on other people's ideas—pander to a middling taste. The occasional underrated minor artist, notably Arp's wife, Sophie Taeuber, pleasantly surprises.

Dadaism was an ancestral vein of cool. Those who wondered what it meant could never know. Because you had to be there, the most informative exhibits at the Modern are video-projected films, especially the delirious "Entr'acte" (1924), by René Clair and Picabia, with a score by Erik Satie. A dancing ballerina, viewed from below through glass, turns out to be beefy and bearded. Duchamp and Man Ray play chess on a rooftop until a jet of water clears the board. A droll Tyrolian marksman is shot to death. His hearse breaks loose from the camel that is pulling it. Mourners follow in a wackily leaping run, filmed in slow motion. The hearse crashes in a field. The dead man, revived, touches the mourners, who vanish. "Entr'acte" was screened during the intermission of "Relâche," a lavishly produced ballet conceived by Picabia, which marked the absorption of Dadaist high jinks into high chic, spicing the romance evoked by the imperishable words "Paris in the twenties." Calvin Tomkins, in his biography of Duchamp, records that Picabia "advised the audience to bring dark glasses and ear plugs, and urged any ex-Dadaists among them to shout, 'Down with Satie!' and 'Down with Picabia!'" By then, Surrealism had commandeered the avant-garde. Picabia denounced it and moved to a château near Cannes, where he undertook kitschy styles of figurative painting whose rapscallion tang would give his influence a second life, on the neo-expressionists of the nineteen-eighties.



From top: Kurt Schwitters's book "Die Kathedrale" (1920); Hans Arp in 1926; a 1919 title page by Francis Picabia.

Duchamp, a courtly French hedonist from a family of modern artists, wasn't echt Dada, because he wasn't anti-rational. On the contrary, he was anti-feeling, a dandy of pure cerebration who was devoted to the simple pleasures of games, sex, and sociability. Neither cowed nor offended by established values, he mildly enjoyed rattling them—for instance, by submitting a urinal, titled "Fountain" and signed "R. Mutt 1917," to an art show, a gesture still preposterously resonant. "You see, the dadas were really committed to action," he told Tomkins. "They were fighting the public"—by his lights, a bore. Arp betrayed a contradiction within the movement when he remarked that "the Dadaists despised what is commonly regarded as art, but put the whole universe on the lofty throne of art." Nothing could be less Duchampian. Duchamp said of art, "As a drug it's probably very useful for a number of people, very sedative, but as religion it's not even as good as God." The trouble with being anti-art, he suggests, is that it gives art too much importance.

Dada was and remains a drug, of the hallucinogenic type. What young self-styled bohemian of the past ninety years hasn't got at least briefly high on it? I sure did, back in the sixties. It was temporary heaven to believe that your besetting mentality—adolescent hysteria in the face of a world that had somehow failed to take your point of view into account—was a state of history-blessed grace. Industries of popular culture have since mastered the formula: mix innocence and cynicism, drizzle with hormones, stand back. Today, it can be 1916 again anytime, at the flash of a credit card. ♦

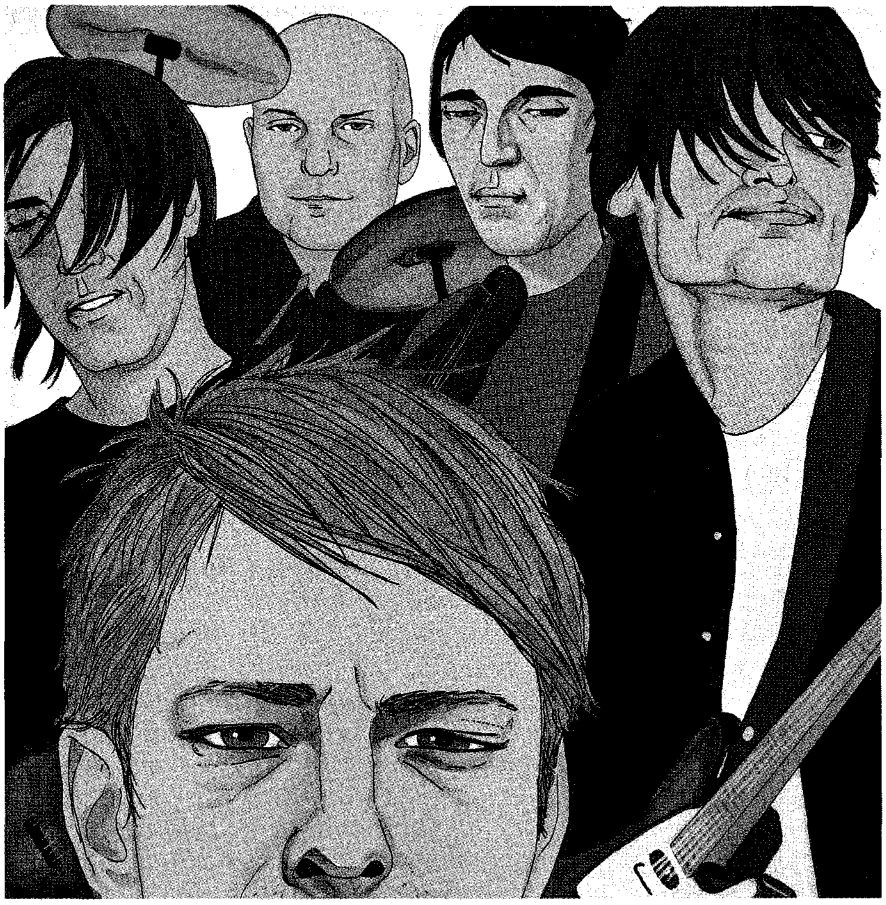
POP MUSIC

FINE TUNING

Reassessing Radiohead.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

Radiohead doesn't sell as many records as some other major rock groups, like Coldplay or U2, but it has hundreds of thousands of fans in the United States, who have stuck by the band for fourteen years—even though the spacious, colorfully ambient music that the group has been making lately is unlike the traditional guitar rock it débuted with. Last year, *Spin* voted Radiohead's 1997 album, "OK Computer," the No. 1 album of the past twenty years, and this month readers of *NME*, the influential British weekly, voted it the fourth-best album of all time, behind Oasis's "Definitely Maybe" and two Beatles albums. "OK Computer" is this generation's "Dark Side of the Moon"—complex and catchy songs surrounded by wobbly, atmospheric music that suggests that the band is up to more than fans will ever figure out, even if they listen to the album every day. I seem to know about a hundred of these fans, and they constantly urge me to give the band a chance. Until recently, I hadn't seen much point in doing so.



The band has a gift for creating compositions thick with intricate harmonies.

The lead singer and main songwriter, Thom Yorke, has essentially three singing styles: a tired snarl, a reedy drone, and a light falsetto. His performances rarely get far before the words dissolve into a moan. On early Radiohead albums, Yorke's lyrics were sombre expressions of juvenile anomie: cars are dangerous, robots are no fun, plastic surgeons do sad, thankless work. After that, his lyrics became shorter and more oblique, often ending in sentence fragments that were repeated again and again, as if such persistence would give the words greater meaning. ("I will eat you alive," he groans fifteen times in "Where I End and You Begin," from 2003.) While Yorke sings, the band makes a wide, soupy sound that seems both a product of and an invitation to stoned passivity.

Yet several of the band's songs got lodged in my head, and after seeing Radiohead perform three times in the past two weeks and listening repeatedly to its recordings—including Yorke's plangent, largely electronic new solo album, "The Eraser"—I've discovered that with each successive record the fog around the music dissipates a little and Radiohead's luminous teamwork comes more clearly into view.

I still don't like Yorke's lyrics, and I wish that the melancholy that Radiohead favors were not the status quo for so many rock bands. But then the group, which consists of four men in addition to Yorke, is not, strictly speaking, much of a rock band: catharsis, speed, and violence are generally absent from its work. Radiohead's gift is in creating compositions thick with intricate harmonies. At a performance in Boston earlier this month, the melody of "Fake Plastic Trees," from the 1995 album, "The Bends," sounded like the second theme of a Schubert string quartet: Yorke's voice mimicked the timbre and varied dynamics of a violinist bowing. While deforming the words, he revealed the melody's elegance, which I couldn't hear before I saw him sing it. Yorke, as his early sponsor Michael Stipe once did, plays his voice the way his bandmates play their instruments, and he has impressively consistent pitch. Radiohead sounds like an instrumental band that happens to have a singer.

In Boston, the stage was decorated with ten rhomboid-shaped screens, which hung behind the musicians. At first, the screens were covered with glowing green dots. Later, they displayed closeup video images of the band members, or parts of them—the drummer Phil Selway's hands, Yorke's head from below, the neck of Colin Greenwood's bass guitar. Live, the band is as fluid and sparkly as it can be arid and mopey on recordings. Yorke does much more than sing. By the fifth song,

IARA TOMIN

he had already played guitar, keyboards, and a pared-down drum set. For the airy, gorgeous "Morning Bell," from "Kid A" (2000), he was in his falsetto mode, singing brightly and playing a Fender Rhodes electric piano, while Selway locked into a clipped pattern and Greenwood plucked a small, hopeful figure high on the neck of his bass.

The band is recording a new album, and on its current tour is trying out at least twelve new songs. Several reprise the hushed, hypnotic mood of "Amnesiac" (2001) and "Hail to the Thief" (2003). The lovely "Videotape," which invokes death and Mephistopheles (Yorke opens with "When I'm at the pearly gates, this'll be on my videotape"), slowly ramps up and then down, the guitars and the drums bobbing around Yorke's piano chords, emphasizing different beats of the rhythm, as if three songs were slowly becoming one.

Most of the new songs are surprisingly upbeat. "15 Step" pivots on a stuttering drum-machine pattern and prompted Yorke to dance across the stage in a happy jig, his arms raised above his head like a club kid's. For "Bodysnatchers," Yorke began alone, playing a short, bluesy riff—a surprisingly conventional figure. Then the band joined in: Ed O'Brien and Jonny Greenwood, both on guitar, and Phil Selway, who launched into a single-minded Krautrock drumbeat. At first, Yorke's melody sounded like a paraphrase of George Harrison's "Within You, Without You," but, as the notes smeared into one another, Yorke sang what may be the ultimate Radiohead lyric: "I have no idea what I'm talking about, I am trapped in this body and can't get out." After a few verses, he worked himself up to a peak of wordless sound, while the guitars played odd, dissonant chords. Suddenly, the guitars dropped back in quiet unison, then surged forward again for an intense but brief coda that was as close to straight rock and roll as anything the band played that night.

More typical was the arrangement for "Everything in Its Right Place," a pulsing song built around Yorke's gentle vocals and twinkly electric piano chords, which recalled Miles Davis's "In A Silent Way." O'Brien and Jonny Greenwood—Colin's brother and the band's unofficial co-leader—were on opposite sides of the stage, each hunched over a small electronic box called a Kaoss pad that allowed them to record and manipulate samples of Yorke's piano and singing. When the band left the stage, the devices remained, playing the distorted bits in an endless loop.

After a second encore, Yorke came to the front of the stage, grinning widely. The crowd howled. He rubbed his hands together, as if they were cold, and held them up, palms out, as if he were about to perform a magic trick. It seemed spontaneous, half greeting, half nervous tic, and the audience responded by holding out their palms to him. Smiling, Yorke repeated the gesture three times.

Radiohead has much in common with the Grateful Dead, including passionate fans who follow the band from city to city, trade bootleg recordings of shows, puzzle out the meanings of the band's cryptic lyrics, and (in Boston, at least) dance badly while smoking expensive-smelling weed. But Radiohead's main interest is not improvisation, nor do the band's affinities to modern classical music and electronica mask the fact that its dominant syntax is pop. The songs mutate briskly, and are larded with hummable motifs. Even when Jonny Greenwood is fiddling with a radio and Yorke is ululating toward the great unknown, the band obeys an internal clock that arrests its elaborations before tedium defeats wonder. Most of the songs aren't long—only a few last more than six minutes, even live. The band plays nimble, bright-eyed arrangements of dense, heavy-lidded music.

Radiohead no longer has a contract with EMI and says that it has no plans to sign with a label. However the band chooses to release its next record, it can still make a handsome living by touring and selling merchandise. Labels spend a lot of time and money worrying about illegal downloading and file-sharing. What they should be worried about is more bands like Radiohead, which could make major labels a relic of the twentieth century. ♦

From an article on coping with death, in the magazine Utne.

I co-parented a beloved boxer dog who, within a week of being asked to write this piece (as if on some cosmic cue), died of a massive heart attack in his apparent prime.

Sounds like he bit off more than he could chew.

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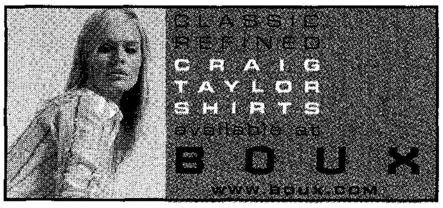
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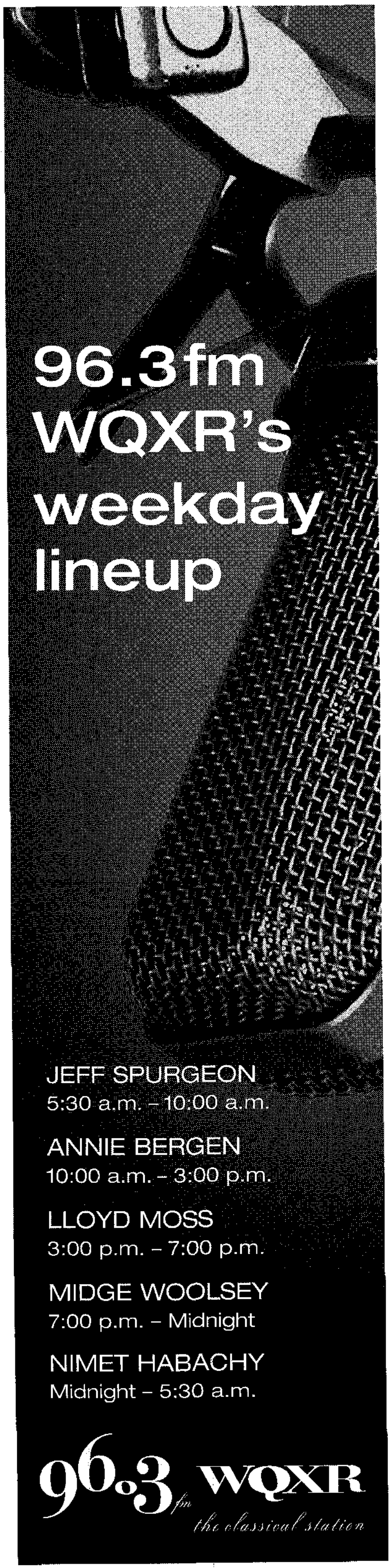


THE THEATRE

TOPIC A

Sex and separation Off Broadway.

BY JOHN LAHR

At one point in Michael Mayer's exciting musical reimagining of Frank Wedekind's 1891 play "Spring Awakening" (at the Atlantic Theatre Company), the fresh-faced teen-agers in a late-nineteenth-century provincial German town dream of the salvation of the flesh. "Touch me—just like that," they sing. "Now lower down, where the sins lie." To a modern ear, the word "sin" in this context sounds almost Chaucerian. Sex is never simple, which is why we need stories about it; these days, however, the idea of sin has, for the most part, been removed from those stories—and with it has gone the thrill of trespass. Positioned somewhere between the Puritan past and the casual present, "Spring Awakening" occupies an unusual space in the anatomy of desire: it manages to resuscitate a sense of danger and anarchy in adolescent passion.

The teen-agers, who yearn and struggle, do the singing here, while in the stifling world of adulthood—personified by two actors (Frank Wood and Mary McCann) who play a variety of authority figures—song is an impossibility. "Spring Awakening" trades in atmospheres, not explanations. In the short opening scene, which lays out the blinkered sexual mores of the period, a girl named Wendla (the excellent Lea Michele) demands that her mother tell her the truth about where babies come from. To make it easier on both of them, she wraps her head in an apron before resting it on her mother's lap. The unnerving image—an echo of Magritte—conveys both the blindness and the shame that envelop issues of the body. It also obliquely reinforces Wendla's lament: "Mama who bore me," she sings. "Mama who gave me/No way to handle things."

The awakening here, it turns out, is not just to sexuality but also to musical storytelling. Mayer makes no concessions to naturalism; he takes aim, instead, at the internal landscape. The abstracted world that he summons up has a universality that allows a German locale to blend easily with the strong melodic lines and dramatic percussive flourishes of the composer Duncan Sheik's American sound. The merger of the repressive Old World and the rebellious New World is illustrated scenically by the intelligent stylization of Susan Hilferty's costumes: man-children in breeches, knee socks, and high-top sneakers; girl-women in simple earth-tone shifts. Bill T. Jones's choreography imposes on the teen-agers a subtle semaphore of gesture, which suggests in its jaggedness their ferocity and emotional fragmentation. It's a sort of St. Vitus' dance, a mad ecstasy, which erupts for the first time at a Latin lesson, where we are introduced to the freethinking youth Melchior (the superb Jonathan Groff), who challenges all received opinions, especially those about sex. He defines his disenchantment neatly in song: "It's the bitch of living—/And living in your head./It's the bitch of living/And sensing God is dead."

Steven Sater's lyrics negotiate the play's melodrama deftly. He manages to find an idiom that is at once artful and disjointed, suggestive of unformed teen-age thought and yet eloquent. In "Don't Do Sadness," for instance, Melchior's sidekick, the bumbling Moritz (John Gallagher, Jr.), whose spiky hair makes him look like Johnny Rotten and whose numbers swagger with defensive punk nihilism, sings, "I don't do sadness. So been there./Don't do sadness. Just don't care." In "My Junk," a song about the adolescents' confusing sexual fantasies, one girl sings, "I try and just kick it, but then, what can I do?/We've all got our junk, and my junk is you." Sater's accomplishment is to convey, in the youths' syntactical fumblings, the inadequacy of speech to cope with the vortex of feeling. When a courtship develops between Wendla and Melchior, Wendla asks him to hurt her. “I’ve never been beaten—my entire life. I’ve never . . . felt . . . *anything*,” she says, unleashing in Melchior a terrifying violence. Moritz, thinking about the separation he feels from his family, sings, “Still, I’ll split, and they’ll, like . . . Well, who knows. . . . Just fuck it—right? Enough. That’s it./You’ll still go on. Well, for a bit./Another day of utter shit.”

Sexuality heralds the beginning of knowledge. The finale, “The Song of Purple Summer,” tinged with both darkness and wonder, incorporates grief into its sense of gladness. It is a hymn to the teenagers’ precarious balance as they pass into adulthood: “The fences sway./The porches swing./The clouds begin to thunder./Crickets wander, murmuring.” These well-wrought words are matched by the rigor of Mayer’s direction, which communicates a powerful and poetic intelligence. Like the embattled youths in the play, Mayer, who had a Broadway hit a few seasons ago with “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” has felt suffocated by the old tropes, and is groping for new ways to create meaning. The musical nowadays can make money; it can rarely make art. “Spring Awakening” is a sprightly step in the right direction.

Jonathan Groff, Lea Michele, and John Gallagher, Jr., as budding teenagers in “Spring Awakening.” Photograph by Cass Bird.

The need for a new kind of story turns out also to be the subtext beneath the Sturm und Drang of Theresa Rebeck’s “The Water’s Edge” (well directed by Will Frears, at the Second Stage). After seventeen years of banishment, Richard (Tony Goldwyn) returns to the dilapidated lakeside house where he grew up and where he raised his family, until his third child, Leah, drowned there. Although he and his wife, Helen (Kate Burton), never divorced, she has built a firewall between them; his monthly checks and his requests to see their two children—the lost Nate (Austin Lysy) and the fierce and fragile Erica (Mamie Gummer)—go unacknowledged. Rage is Helen’s antidepressant. She still holds Richard responsible for the drowning, and she maintains, despite his denials, that he was having an affair at the time. “It happened as I know it happened and you can’t change that now, after all this time you can’t suddenly make it all different!” she tells him at one point.

Richard, who claims to have properly mourned his daughter, has come to disabuse Helen of her views. Rebeck gives him a shrewd psychological argument. We need narratives to impose a sense of coherence on the unsettling arbitrariness of life, he explains. “When children die, there is no reason,” he tells his gullible young girlfriend, Lucy (Katharine Powell), whom he brings along to defuse the situation. “We all have to think something, there has to be a story, doesn’t there, otherwise, it’s too . . .” Richard arrives with a modest proposal. He will pay for a new home for the family, but he wants to take back the house, to which he has legal claim, and to have contact with his children—who gradually warm to him during the first act. The battle, in other words, is joined. Something has to give, but what? And how?

The outstanding cast makes the most of Rebeck’s expert naturalistic exposition. As Erica, Gummer is particularly piquant, alternately scuttling furiously indoors and bolting out onto the porch to vent at her long-absent father. As Helen, the droll Burton stirs the pot with well-timed wisecracks. “You age well, it’s true, but maybe that’s because you don’t seem to learn anything,” she tells Richard, whom Goldwyn makes both attractive and amusingly smug.

Act I, which is all about character, is terrific. Act II, which is all about commerce, is not. Rebeck paints herself into a corner, only to take the most sensational way out. “The Water’s Edge” is like the bastard child of Arthur Miller and “Desperate Housewives.” At one point, Nate talks to Erica about their parents. “It was always about who was going to win,” he says. “They took our lives from us!” If only Rebeck had written that play! Instead, with no narrative preparation—and, as far as I can see, no justification in the psychology of the characters—“The Water’s Edge” becomes a sort of trifecta of unearned pathologies. The entire second act feels cooked up—a menu of strange and overheated choices ripped from the Southern Gothic Cookbook. Rebeck takes her story elegantly over so many narrative hurdles, only to fall at the fundamental one: truthfulness. The result is glib but not good. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

PRISONERS

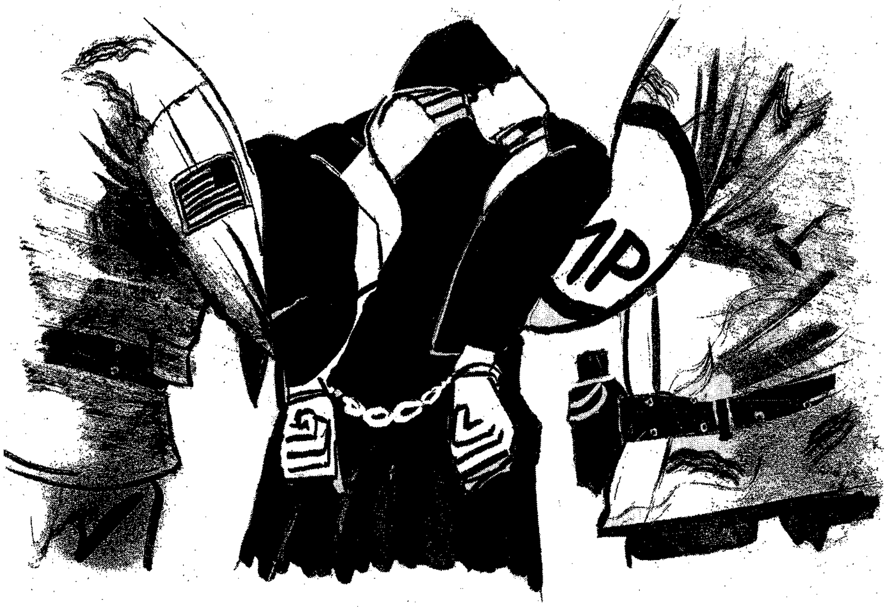
"The Road to Guantánamo" and "Nacho Libre."

BY DAVID DENBY

"The Road to Guantánamo," Michael Winterbottom and Mat Whitecross's film about three real-life British nationals who were held for two years at the American military prison, left me in a foul mood—headache, tightness in the chest, erratic pulse. In some ways, the movie is poorly made, and it is possibly disingenuous. What works in it, however, works terrifyingly well. The scenes of suffering and humiliation—the prisoners hammered by their American guards and interrogators—are hell to sit through, and completely convincing. Winterbottom and Whitecross, who are British, clearly want to arouse international indignation toward the United States, and they will. But what others think of us matters less than what we think of our government and of ourselves. Despite the flaws of "The Road to Guantánamo," the issues it raises hang over us like a curse.

The movie is ostensibly about three young men caught in the wrong time and place. In September, 2001, Asif was a nineteen-year-old British citizen of Pakistani descent living in Tipton, a small city in the Midlands. He travelled to Pakistan to marry a girl his family had chosen, and, on a lark, three Tipton friends, Ruhel, Shafiq, and Monir, joined him there. In Karachi, in a mosque, they heard an imam say that the coming war would produce chaos in Afghanistan, and they interpreted this to mean "You should help the Afghani people." With no further goading or incentive, they headed across the border—at just the moment, in October, when the United States was dropping bombs on the Taliban.

Is this a case of spectacularly rotten timing, or is something being kept from us? The account of why the friends cross the border isn't very persuasive. Nor does it make much sense that, after a few weeks of banging around a torn-up Afghanistan, they decide to go back to Pakistan, only to get into a van that takes them to Kunduz Province, where the Taliban is making a stand against the Northern Alliance. If they are press-ganged by the Taliban into service of some sort, the filmmakers don't tell us. Are we supposed to believe that their driver deceives them? Does he take a wrong turn? The young men may be clueless, but the filmmakers' habit of obfuscating key points makes us wonder whether somebody is lying. One of the friends, Monir, mysteriously disappears, but, after that, the rest of the narrative is clear enough: Asif, Ruhel, and Shafiq, captured by the Northern Alliance, are turned over to the American Army and taken to an airbase at Kandahar, where they are hooded, shackled, forced to kneel or to lie face down, screamed at, beaten, and interrogated. Then they are shipped to Guantánamo.



A British film tells the story of three Britons detained by the Americans.

In the Afghanistan scenes, the filmmakers' handheld shooting successfully catches the disorder and the confusion of a war fought by irregular armies. But any rhythm that Winterbottom and Whitecross build up is dispelled by a clumsy device: in interviews filmed in England, the actual young men—gentle-looking bearded fellows, finally released in 2004—speak directly into the camera. Mildly, they recount their story, and these bits of testimony, which are remarkably unrevealing, are cut into the action as it unfolds. Throughout the film, we are shuttlecocked between documentary and reënactment, with a swat to our concentration each time. One of the young men is played by a real actor; the others are non-professionals from the same part of the Midlands as Asif and his friends. Physically, they are fine, but they don't have the consciousness or the technique of trained performers, and they can't shape their work expressively. Very little is written for them. In Afghanistan, they discuss travel plans, and long for pizza. Later, they make only minimal attempts to defend themselves to their interrogators: "You're not going to believe me, so I'm not going to say anything else." In the end, they come off as maddeningly opaque and inconsequential, like balky teens arrested for hooliganism at a soccer match. Their ordinariness is the point, of course, but the filmmakers don't allow them to break out of the mediocrity in any way.

The Guantánamo scenes were shot in Iran, but the bare brown mountains in the distance—not a flowering bush or a bit of water in sight—shouldn't blind us to the authenticity of the metal cages on the ground in which the men are held. The general principle of the Americans' treatment of their prisoners is total control. If a detainee so much as raises his head, he is threatened or clobbered. In the interrogations, the Americans browbeat the men: "You're Al Qaeda, you're Al Qaeda! . . . Where's bin Laden?" Their attitude is that the prisoners are guilty by definition—guilty because they have been captured and sent to Guantánamo. Like Soviet interrogators during the purges of the nineteen-thirties, they need to force a confession out of their charges in order to prove that the government hasn't made a mistake. The prisoners aren't allowed the slightest authority as human beings—and certainly not the authority of innocence.

The movie is shot from the victims' point of view, as a kind of absurdist, theatre-of-cruelty exercise set in the real world. But what do the Americans think they are doing? How do they justify themselves? The actors playing the guards and interrogators are nonentities with beefy faces; they are just as opaque as the men who have fallen into their hands. We seem to have entered a land in which intelligence of any kind has been extinguished. The Red Cross has reported that some of the prisoners at Guantánamo are falling into despair; three have committed suicide, and more than twenty have tried. "The Road to Guantánamo" will tell you why, but it won't tell you much else. And the movie, harsh as it is, underplays the moral case against Guantánamo. The filmmakers implicitly condemn the practice of holding men without formally charging them, and without giving them access to counsel and family visits. But, in making a melodrama about three innocent men, they ignore the larger point—that all prisoners should be granted these basic rights. This exposé of American sadism is a shocker, but the movie doesn't bring us any closer to understanding the abuse that is carried out in our names.

Jack Black has been acting in TV and movies since 1991, but it was in 2000, in a supporting role in "High Fidelity," that he became a star. Black played an employee in John Cusack's record store—a vinyl haven staffed by pop-culture pedants. Black was the most severe of the scholars, so scornfully sure of his taste that he chased away a middle-aged customer for attempting to buy a sappy song for his daughter. Outraged by some error of judgment, Black pulled his eyebrows down toward his nose, puckered his mouth in contempt, and tilted it upward. With his features bunched in the middle of his face, he looked like an infant whose pacifier has been yanked. Jack Black, like the rubbery Jim Carrey, gives his entire body over to some extreme idea of self. Short and round, with oil-dark eyes, he plays oblivious egotists who like to feel good all the time. He swivels and shakes like a drunken top and caresses imaginary female rumps in the air with a curved palm. Black has his own comedic rock band, Tenacious D, and the rock performer seems to be his favorite model of bad behavior. In "School of Rock," he played a failed rocker who wound up teaching kids at a stuffy school to play music with a heavy-metal snarl. His character still believed in music as protest; he didn't know that corporate pop had killed the revolution. At this point, Black, liberated in movement, may be doing more than any musician to keep the rebellious spirit of rock alive.

Music seems to offer Black the purest way of using his body. In "Nacho Libre," which Jared Hess ("Napoleon Dynamite") directed and co-wrote with Jerusha Hess and Mike White, Black moves in a way that isn't as funny—doing a souped-up version of Mexican professional wrestling, *lucha libre*, which itself is a souped-up version of American wrestling. The story is just an excuse for Black to jump around. He plays Nacho, a corn-chip-fed cook at a Mexican monastery and orphanage. He has thick curly hair and a mustache, and his eyes glint with the dirtiest thoughts entertained by any religious functionary since Rasputin. To make money and to win a girl—a chaste and beautiful nun—he puts on a cape and a mask in *lucha* style, links up with a skinny thief (Héctor Jiménez) as a tag-team partner, and heads for the arena. If you've seen the posters, with Black bare-chested, looking like a tiny Latino Superman, in red-and-blue tights and a red cape, then you've got a good idea of the movie. There are many scenes of mock-*lucha* wrestling, which become as boring as actual wrestling. "Nacho Libre," naïvely made kids' stuff, lacks such minor attributes as a decent script and supporting cast. There's nothing to look at but Black, as he flies around the ring. He's short and heavy, but he must have powerful arms and legs, because he jumps and skips like a demon. I can't wait to see him play an enraged samurai warrior, with a kimono sloping over his round, pink belly. ♦

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Volume LXXXII, No. 19, June 26, 2006. The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: Jan. 23 & 30, Feb. 13 & 20, July 10 & 17, Aug. 7 & 14, Dec. 25 & Jan. 1) by The Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Louis Cona, vice-president and publisher; Jamie Engel, associate publisher; Alatia Bradley, advertising director; Karen Quinn-Panzer, advertising director; Judy Safir, director of finance and business operations; Daniella Wells, executive director marketing & strategic planning; Janine Silvera, executive director of creative services; Jacqueline Cinguina, director of integrated marketing; Steve Porter, creative director/advertising; Ellen Reid, creative services director; Edward Klaris, general counsel. Advance Magazine Publishers Inc.: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president–human resources; John Buese, executive vice-president–chief information officer; David Orlin, senior vice-president–strategic sourcing; Robert Bennis, senior vice-president–real estate; Maurie Perl, senior vice-president–chief communications officer. Shared services provided by Advance Magazine Group: Steven T. Florio, Advance Magazine Group vice chairman; David B. Chemidlin, senior vice-president–general manager, shared services center. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. R123242885. Canada Post return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

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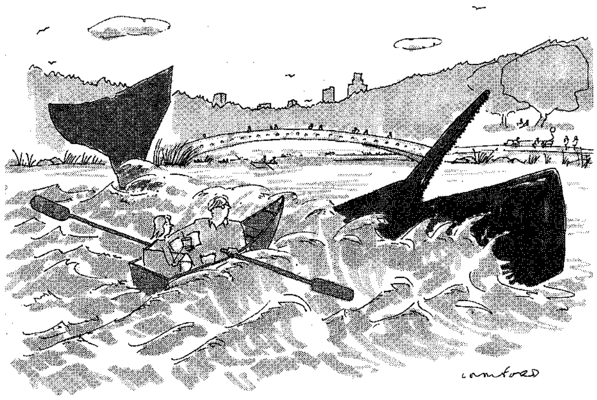
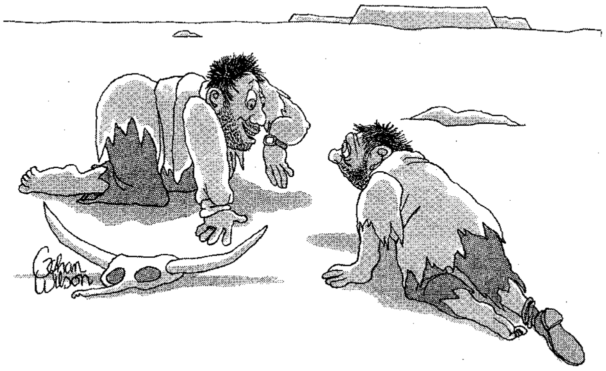
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Frank Cotham, must be received by Sunday, June 25th. Finalists in the June 12th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 10th & 17th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Mind the whale, dear."
Kate Borowske, St. Paul, Minn.



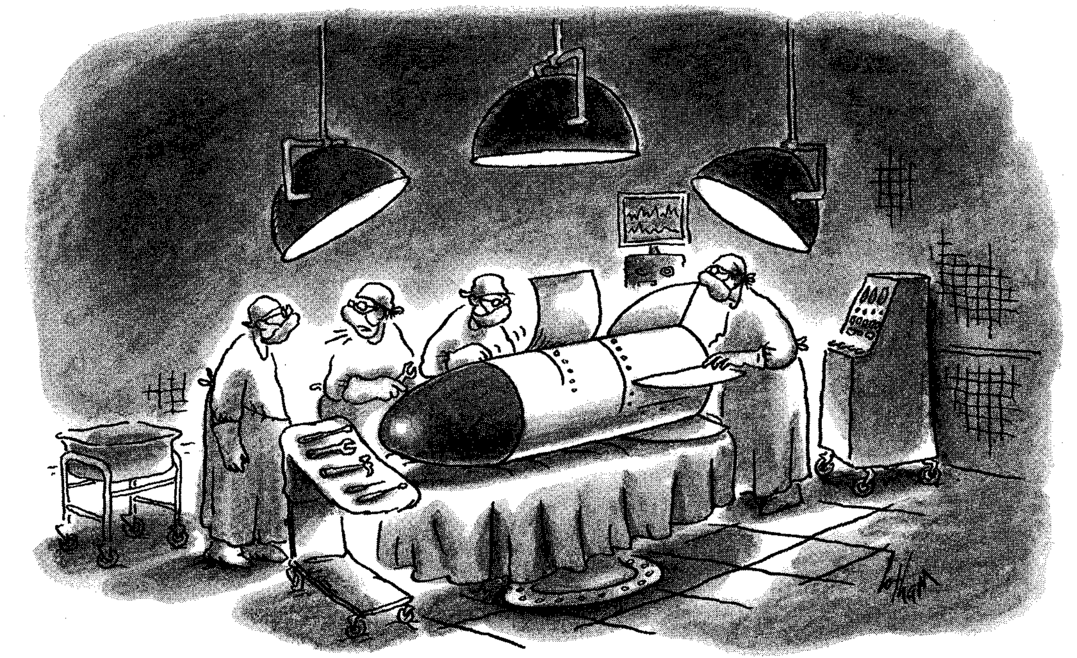
THE FINALISTS

"Maybe this thing isn't a compass."
Michael Sievers, Charlottesville, Va.

"And, best of all, it's completely waterproof!"
Damien Licata, Keene, N.H.

"Thank God for TiVo."
Ed Walchak, Wilmette, Ill.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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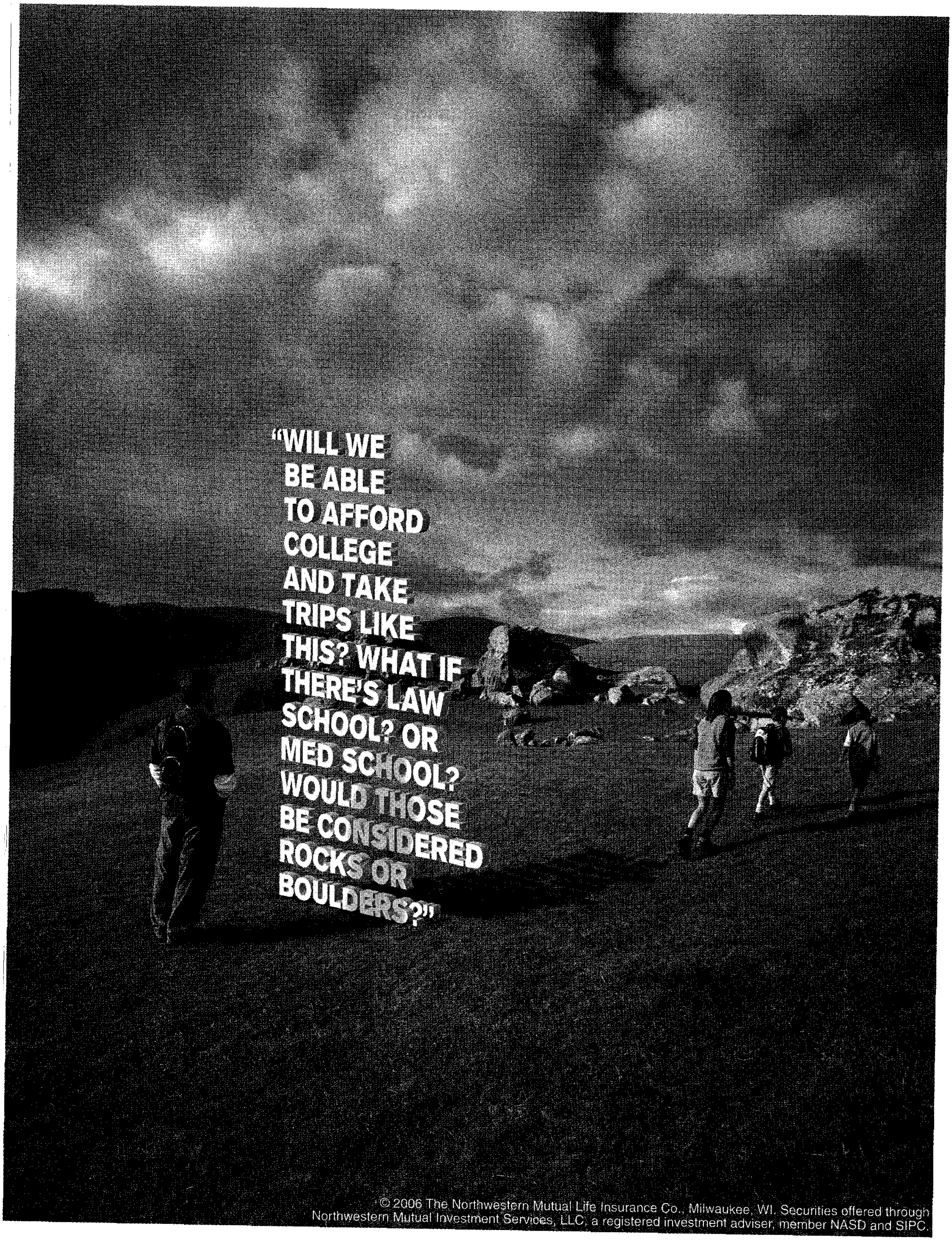
"WILL WE BE ABLE TO AFFORD COLLEGE AND TAKE TRIPS LIKE THIS? WHAT IF THERE'S LAW SCHOOL? OR MED SCHOOL? WOULD THOSE BE CONSIDERED ROCKS OR BOULDERS?"

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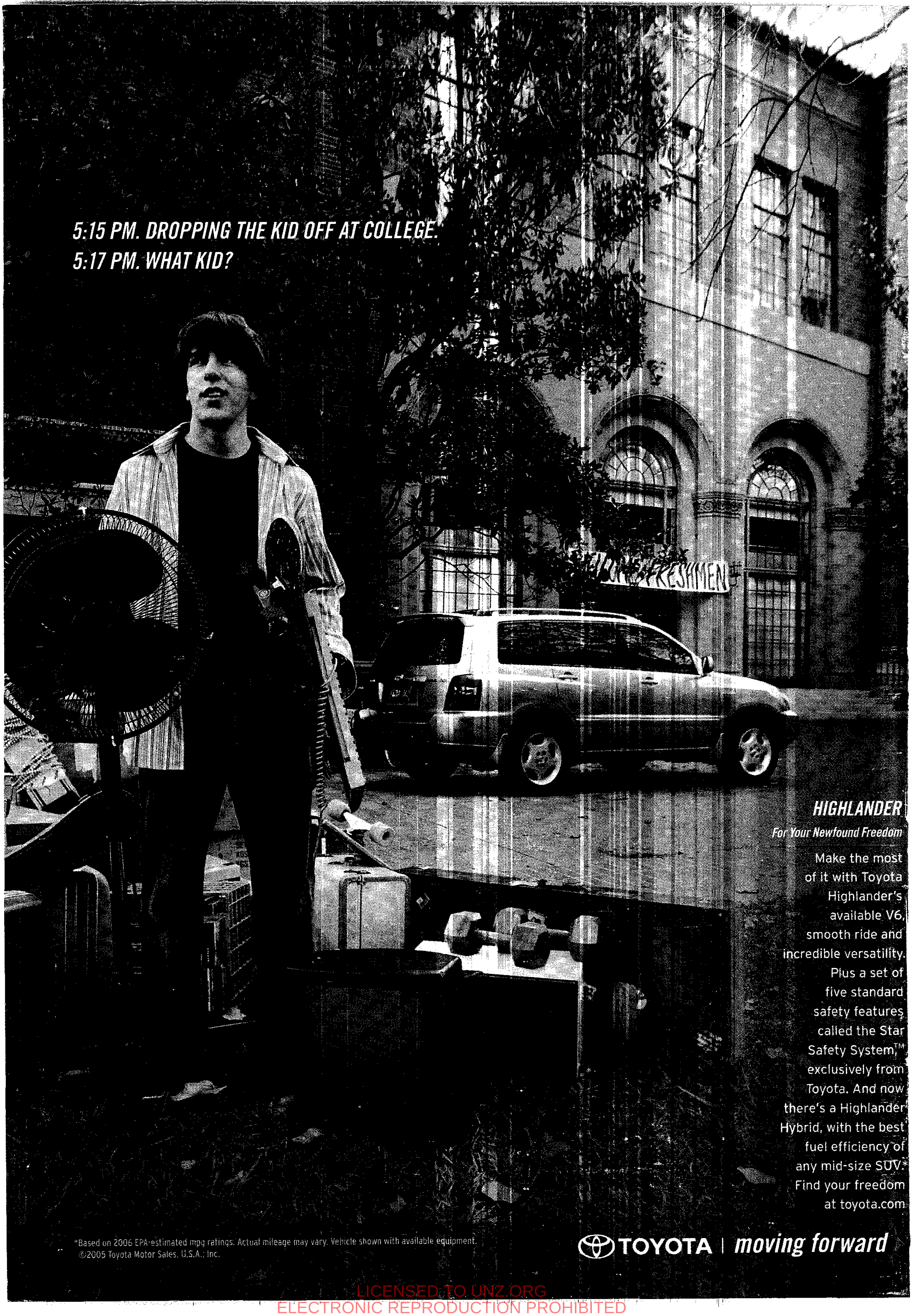
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5:17 PM. WHAT KID?
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